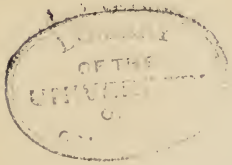
IMAGINATION IN DREAMS
AND THEIR STUDY

IMAGINATION IN DREAMS AND THEIR STUDY : BY FREDERICK GREENWOOD



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PREFACE

TWO essays—one of them published in the *Contemporary Review*, the other in the *New Review*—are the foundation of this little book. Those papers were favoured with a good deal of attention; which I take as additional evidence, in a small way, that though most of us make it a point of enlightenment to speak slightingly of dreams the contempt we ask credit for is rarely sincere. We really know better than to speak slightingly of dreams; unless, indeed, we have no experience of them or have never dreamt anything but incoherent and inconsequential nonsense.

In this volume the original matter reappears. But there was more to say than

could be said within the limit of a couple of review articles, and therefore, in making a book of it, there has been a considerable expansion of theory, suggestion, and illustration.

It is the illustration, the dreams which have been chosen to exemplify the potentialities of mind in sleep, that will be most interesting to the greater number of readers. And though speculation is all very well, only by such experiences as these do we learn. Therefore I shall be glad if any dreamer of dreams like those I have cited—that is to say, dreams which are psychologically informing, or that testify to the powers of imagination in sleep—will give me the benefit of what insight he has gained. There is little difficulty in distinguishing between dreams which have a scientific interest and those that have none; or if there be any difficulty, the following pages may serve to diminish it. My publisher will take in any communication on the

subject that may kindly be sent; or letters may be addressed to me at the Garrick Club, London.

The reader will find that some things touched upon in the first essay, 'Imagination in Dreams,' reappear in the other one on 'The Study of Dreams.' But it will also be seen that they are only brought on again for discussion in the more appropriate place, or for additional illustration.

F. G.

IMAGINATION IN DREAMS

IMAGINATION IN DREAMS

I

It is said that the imagination of man cannot portray what the eye has not seen, or what has not entered into the channel of the senses through conversation, the reading of books, the contemplation of pictures; and the assertion seems to be incontestable. If a man had never seen a tree, or if the description or the pictorial representation of a tree had never been conveyed to him, he could not place a tree before his imagination nor his imagination place a tree before him. Nobody can doubt it; and it seems to follow that familiarity with one kind of tree would help his fancy little or not at all to create another of a distinctly different character and appearance. In a country of oaks, where no willow and no poplar had ever been seen, neither of these could be known to imagination.

The artist, the poet, is compelled to acknowledge that the most creative fancy is incapable of creating any such thing; and that whatever his gifts of imagination may be, they can supply him with nothing more original than the discovery of harmonies, discords, resemblances, and possible combinations between the things that every eye can see and every ear can hear. It is not supposed that Architecture could have conceived its Gothic style, the most splendidly imaginative of all, had there been no woods and no tall avenues roofed with interlacing boughs. The poet may make a thousand inspiring applications of the beauty of the rose and the glories of the dawn; but when Shakespeare imagined his island in writing the *Tempest*, even he could put nothing into its fields, its air, its sky, that was not drawn from actually-created things. Looking at that piece of work, we may be sure that its great author bent the whole force of his matchless fancy upon a task of creation; but yet there is nothing in Prospero's domain that answers to the first rose ever seen—no invention, we need not say of natural splen-

dours like the dawning light, but none that matches with the fen-fire and the rushes in the fen.

But it is not in art or poesy that the limitations of imagination are most sharply illustrated or most sorely felt, but in Religion. At every movement of religious thought we are conscious of indomitable, hard-set boundaries, which yet we are for ever leaping at. 'Thought,' however, is not the right word, nor 'imagination' itself, except when it is applied to the apprehension, the imagining of substantial things. The difficulty of imagining heaven is an example of what I mean. This has been a distress to thousands and thousands for generations; and the distress has been greatest where the faculty to overcome it (the one so sorely baffled) has been strongest and greatest too. The stronger the effort, indeed, the more complete is the sense of failure. The fainting imagination has still to fall back on winged angels —dove-creatures; on white robes, golden thrones, gates of pearl; strains of music which, though we need not suppose them drawn from fiddles according to the frankly-

acknowledged fancy of the old painters, are in fact such compositions as Bach, Beethoven, or some other mundane master has put into your head. There is nothing more inspiring to the mind of man than religious enthusiasm; its fervours are more kindling to the imagination than any other; and many clear intellects are ready to believe that the yearnings of religious enthusiasm to behold in vision the world beyond are sometimes rewarded. But if so, nothing has been brought back to earth that was not found there before. Neither the religious enthusiast in his loftiest ecstasy, nor the fancy of our Miltons and Dantes (poets and religious at the same time) has ever got many inches from the ground. The limitations of imagination are too strong for them—for the fiery Hebrew seers, the writers of Revelation themselves; and John Martin painted his pictures in our own day to illustrate the same inability.

We are to remark of this positive observation, however, that it is itself limited: it does not extend beyond things audible and visible. And perhaps we have to make distinctions between the waking imagination

and the dream imagination. That, indeed, we have certainly to do. How far the differences may go is the main point for discovery in speculating upon dreams—the point to be borne in mind constantly by whosoever shall honour with his attention this farrago of hints, questionings, and illustrations.

The first distinction to be marked between the workings of imagination in these several conditions is that the one is much more feeble and restricted than the other. Every effort of the waking fancy to place before the mind's eye a tree different from all known kinds of tree is fatally embarrassed by a sense of travesty: we do not go far without finding out that we are burlesquing the real and not inventing a variation. Many 'Temptations of St. Anthony' witness to the same failure, which is equally conspicuous in all similar attempts. When in writing a play or a romance we picture a face to ourselves, we are at once aware that it is a memory, and not an original product of imagination. The intention, probably, is to represent a certain type of character, or more often some distinct variant of a type; but

the face that rises to fancy as its embodiment is no conjuration from abstract ideas. It can always be traced to memory; it always, to our own consciousness at the moment of apparition, derives from recollection of some individual person or some picture. I say always, for there is little hazard, I suppose, in assuming that this is invariably the case. But as to the faces seen in dreams, we are often quite confident that they are not memory-pictures.

Of course it is not denied that most of the faces seen in dreams steal out from some recess of memory more or less remote; and, equally of course, there is nothing remarkable in that. The remarkable thing is that other faces do not. To be sure, absolute confidence on this point cannot be established by proof. But this can be said: we feel that we never before beheld these dream-faces with the same degree of certainty that we feel while glancing at some striking head in a crowd that we never saw it till that moment;—a degree of certainty so high on many occasions that there would be no difficulty in swearing to it in a court of law.

Moreover (and with this remark additional matter for consideration comes in), the dream-face is no mere outline of shadowy and meaningless feature. On the contrary, in the exceptional cases with which we are alone concerned, it is strongly marked by individuality of character as well as vigour of drawing. The memory-picture presented to the mind when we are awake is far less vivid in both particulars ; and the difference in sharpness of presentation is seen in other things beside faces. Whether it be of a person or a scene, the picture surrendered to waking memory is never so distinct, never so clearly held in view, as that which rises to our minds in sleep.

But as to the originality of these sleep-born visions, it is denied by the reasoning which is epitomised on page 1 of this little book. There the argument is that every scene and every personage in a dream must be supplied from the storehouse of memory-recorded observation ; and that if their non-recognition by ourselves needs to be explained, we may choose between two explanations. Either the dream is furnished

with incidents and *dramatis personæ* from a body of impressions lodged in the brain without our knowledge, or else the faculty that could tell us that they *are* memories is dormant when we slumber and takes no part in dreams. The dream-face passes for one that never came into the mind through the waking senses, because the faculty that could detect it as a memory is itself asleep.

Of these explanations the second is the more acceptable, though it is not the one that is commonly adopted. It rests upon the theory, of which more will be said by-and-by, that not all our mental faculties are active when we dream. Some of them, and more particularly those which seem to be of the governing and regulating order, are then at rest; as much as our limbs are, probably. Amongst these drowsy faculties is the one which has the custody of the dim population of the brain called remembrances. And the supposition is that while their custodian slumbers, its unwatched remembrances run riot at the call of imagination; which, itself awake and released from restraint, engages

them in some mad fantastic masquerade. That is the theory, and it is supported by the familiar fact that the most impressive dreams soon begin to fade from recollection. But *is* Memory so sleepily inattentive? What we know is that when Memory is called back to service in the morning, its very first business is to tell us that we have been dreaming and what we have been dreaming about. Sometimes, indeed, it can tell but a confused story, and on such occasions we may suppose its observations drowsy and intermittent. But on the other occasions it is perfectly clear and positive: we have been dreaming of certain remembered persons and certain remembered things. Do we doubt its testimony on either head? That were impossible: what, then, when this same witness assures us with equal confidence that it knows nothing whatever of the scene or the actors in the dream—which it will sometimes do? There are times when, interrogated over and over again for some face and figure that have haunted our sleep-darkened minds, Memory will still return the same instantaneous and positive answer. So positive is it that we

should rely upon its truth without hesitation in a case of waking actuality, though the consequences were to send a man to jail. Sometimes, indeed, Memory can adduce a special reason for disowning a dream-face. Remembrance goes by singularity of expression as well as singularity of form; and there are occasions when Memory is able to declare that it never witnessed in any human being the peculiar revelations of character that spoke from the countenance invented by some power within ourselves. Which is of itself a very remarkable thing. No such invention is possible when we are awake and sane: yet in sleep it is not uncommon.

It appears, then, that the seeming originality of dream-phenomena cannot be quite accounted for by the second of the two explanations cited above. Perhaps there is more virtue in the other. The more favourite theory, it enjoins us still to believe that these dream-phenomena are memories cast in some strange form by imagination. This they are invariably, and if we do not always recognise them as such it is only because there are more memories in the brain than Memory

itself is conscious of. It is when some of these furtive remembrances come forth to masquerade in our drowsing minds that we fancy we dream of things that never were and never could be known to us. It must be allowed that this is a very winning explanation, but what does it imply? Not, be it observed, that memory-impressions lie forgotten in the mind for years and then come forth, for such memories are recognised as soon as they reappear, and therefore do not come into the question. The explanation implies that Memory can be charged with lasting impressions of things seen which yet pass through the visual sense unnoticed and unknown of it.

Though not inconceivable, this seems incredible. The reluctance to admit that there can be anything wonderful or even remarkable in dreams is surely carried too far when a fancy like this is set up as a simple and easy assumption. No doubt we look upon many things with no present consciousness of what lies before our view. That these unregarded things pass through the crystalline medium of the eyes to the interior of the

camera, and are so carried to their appropriate memory-cells in the brain, may be likely enough ; and yet not as an invariable experience. For since there are degrees of conscious receptivity when we look about us in a landscape, for example (some things being taken in with a much firmer grasp of sight than others), it is only reasonable to imagine similar degrees of insensitiveness, declining to the point of blank rejection. Indeed, every man's experience tells him that there is a point of insensitiveness to what his eyes rest upon (it is called 'blindness' in common talk) which does amount to rejection. Nevertheless, it may fairly be supposed that everything which confronts the organ of sight passes as an image to the sensatorium in the brain. But whether it remains there for the tenth of a moment and no more, or whether it takes its place as a fixed memory, surely depends upon the attention or non-attention it receives on entering ; or else upon the chance of its being associated at the time with some other scene or incident which does seize upon attention. That it should sneak past attention, so to say, and

go on to exist as a strong dramatic memory in sleep, but not as a memory or as recognisable by memory when we are awake, seems incredible.

Besides, it is to be remembered that we are speaking now of dream-visions of a singularly striking character, the like of which could not have been looked upon in real life without engaging attention. And so, to go back to our unknown though strongly-marked dream-faces, first there is the fact that the waking mind, with the whole of its faculties intent upon them, and memory most of all, refuses to acknowledge that they ever did pass to it through the channel of the senses; and next, judgment goes on to declare that the characteristics they exhibit are too striking to slip unobserved through the gates of perception, there to fix themselves in whatever nook of memory visual perceptions find record. It is reasonable to believe that such perceptions are only recorded in memory when they do arrest attention at the moment they meet the sight; and such faces as these *must* have arrested attention, and could not

have passed through the gates of sight unregarded.

These reasonings seem sound enough where none can be absolutely demonstrative; but to what conclusions do they lead? Apparently, that some dream-visions, if only a few by comparison, are creations of the mind; and if so, then that the limits of imagination which philosophy marks out, and which no effort of the waking mind can surmount, are overleapt in sleep.

It is possible, perhaps, to offer some direct evidence in favour of those conclusions.

II.

WE have spoken of dream-faces merely by way of example, choosing them because they are the most frequent, the most complete, and to the dreamer himself the most striking of what may be called the original creations of dreams. It happens, however, that visions of this kind sometimes present themselves to us in the dark when we are awake, perfectly sane, and unaware of any sort of physical

disturbance in ourselves; and they appear without any effort of imagination.

Maury, a French writer who studied dreams, experimented in their production, and wrote a book about them, calls these visions 'hallucinations hypnogogiques.' According to him, they appear between sleeping and waking—when we are 'dropping off.' They are dream-stuff, so to speak, and precursors of the dreams that fill our minds when we are quite asleep. Galton, too, has written of these 'visions of sane persons'—phantoms which have all the appearance of external objects, and which are certainly not produced by any exertion of either memory or fancy.

In this way, Galton says, a lady used to see showers of red roses which turned into a flight of golden speckles or spangles; and not only were the roses presented to her vision as distinctly as real flowers in broad daylight might be, but she could smell their perfume. The most surprising thing here is the smelling of the perfume. It is the only instance I remember where the organs either of taste or smell were exercised and gratified

in any manner of dreaming.[1] There is no such thing in my own experience, except that at infrequent times of fatigue I share the sensations of those who are said to have discovered a rose scent flowing from and about them. An evanescent but very distinct violet scent flushes from my hands (or so I fancy), and a similar sensation may have accompanied the flower-vision reported by Mr. Galton. It is more to the purpose, however, that both Mr. Galton and M. Maury relate stories of faces seen in the dark in like manner; faces seemingly standing off upon the air, and coming and going as with a will and purpose of their own. These I know

[1] But as to the flowers and spangles, I know of a very similar experience; and it is not uncommon, perhaps. Many times when I was a child I used to see within my closed eyelids, as I lay abed in the dark, a little cloud of bright golden sparks, which first became larger and more scintillating, and then turned into a flock of sheep rapidly running down hill into the general darkness below. A few moments after the sheep had disappeared the spangles would come forth again, and again the transformation would ensue; and this would be repeated a dozen times, perhaps. Besides what is found in the sparks or spangles, there is a certain likeness here between the roses falling (in 'a shower') and the sheep running down hill. But there does not seem to be much significance in the matter.

something about. It is not, perhaps, a very rare experience; but however that may be, I have been familiar with such apparitions for many years.

In my case, as in M. Maury's, these faces usually appear in the dropping-off-to-sleep time. But they also appear when I wake in the night; and the effect of their coming on either occasion is to dispel the 'tween-sleep-and-waking twilight and fix a critical attention on themselves. Yet they are never seen except when the eyelids are closed, and they have an apparent distance of five or six feet. Though they seem living enough, they look through the darkness as if traced in chalks on a black ground. Colour sometimes they have, but the colour is very faint. Indeed, their general aspect is as if their substance were of pale smoke; and their outlines waver, fade, and revive (with the effect, though not the aspect, of phosphorescent limnings), so that, except for the half of a moment, the whole face is never clearly or completely visible at one time. Always of a strikingly distinctive character, these visionary faces are like none that can be

remembered as seen in life or in pictures; indeed, one of their constant and most remarkable characteristics is their convincing *un*likeness.

But M. Maury's experience seems to have differed from mine in one particular, and the difference is important to the whole subject. In his case these phantoms nearly always represented persons known to him; and the exceptions being undescribed, the presumption is that Maury saw nothing in them for special observation. In my case there has been no recurrence of any known face. As they appear one after another at broken intervals of succession, I often ask myself who was ever like that, or that, and I find no answer except in a fancied resemblance to some historical or mythological personage. They strike the view as entirely strange, surprisingly original, and above all intensely meaning. In all likelihood, Blake's visions were some such phantoms as these, presented to his eyes in broad daylight. I am inclined to think so because his wonderful, dreadful drawing, 'The Ghost of a Flea,' is precisely such a transcript as I could have

made by the score but for lack of his pictorial skill. Under my own eyelids I have seen many a face of the same awful family; and some more dreadful still, being alive and astir with animation.

Yet the greater number are not of the too terrible kind. They are not that, but not for want of significance. For after the fact that nothing foreknown or familiar ever appears amongst them, the most remarkable thing about these visions is that they often look like the fleeting embodiment of some passion or mood of the mind: usually not the bettermost. Some faces expressive of nobility and serenity appear, but I have never seen amongst them the mask of pity, or love, or any soft emotion. Grief the most despairing, scorn, cunning, pride, hate, malicious inquiry, envious or triumphant mockery —no human face that ever was seen, I am sure, displayed these emotions with a comparable fulness and intensity. It is not the characteristic of all, but it is of some to an almost appalling extent; and if Blake did see these faces, either in daylight or in darkness, he had more than fancy-wrought obser-

vation to draw upon when he depicted the Passions.

And now to connect these faces in the dark with what has been said before about dream-faces. The apparitions of our waking hours (we are at the least more awake than asleep when 'les hallucinations hypnogogiques' intrude) are absolutely independent of the will, and can neither be imitated nor commanded by any effort of will-directed imagination. This, too, Maury seems to have found; though his narrower way of putting it is that will is in suspension when these phantoms appear. A 'condition de non-attention, de non-attention intellectuelle, est dans le principe nécessaire pour la production du phénomène.' If by this is meant that the phenomena never appear till the various faculties of the mind are dissolved in drowsiness, the 'tension intellectuelle' quite relaxed, no doubt the statement is one which all experience would describe as accurate. But, if, going further, it means that the apparitions are banished as soon as the mind which they have startled into wakefulness is fixed upon them, M.

Maury's observations do not accord with mine.

My story would be this. You are swinging to sleep in a pleasant half-doze—sometimes ; or, your body soothed in rest, you lie awake thinking in an orderly absorbed way of this or that, when, as a wreath of smoke might arise, there before you is a face in the dark.[1] It is not startling, and yet however far advanced you may be in a 'condition de non-attention,' you are withdrawn from that condition at once. Attention fully recalled is fixed upon the apparition, which remains long enough wavering in view to be distinctly seen. But if you wish to retain it for contemplation (as does happen, for sometimes the phantom has a profoundly mean-

[1] A more accurate description would be that something which for one moment looks like a smoke-wreath or cloud-wreath takes form the next. And perhaps many persons have noticed that when they lie with closed eyes at night in a dark room, light-charged clouds seem to float between eye and eyelid. The darkness in the dome of the lid is much less black than the darkness without ; which does not seem easy to account for. Perhaps by stored light in the organ of vision : is that possible ?—or perhaps by phosphorescent currents of the brain. I do not know what the oculists might say.

ing, or appealing, or revealing look), you wish and try in vain. Your will did not bring it, and your will cannot hold it. Under the strenuous intent grasp of your sight it will change altogether after the manner of 'dissolving views,' and then fade out. When it has died away, by no effort of will or imagination can it be recalled. The endeavour to recall it having failed, make an experiment. Bend will and fancy to the production of another and (necessarily) preconceived image, such as the face of a child or an old woman; and even while you are in the utmost stress of the attempt a completely different apparition will rise to view. Where you try so hard to draw from the darkness, or on the darkness, a pretty childish face, the mask of Rapine or Malice will come forth; in total disregard of your will, and to the defeat of your imaginative powers in set competition.

It appears that from this account—which is founded on frequent and unvarying experience—the believer in spirit-worlds and ghostly visitants may derive an argument favourable to his own persuasion. He will

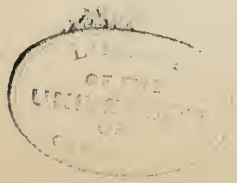
point to the significant fact that faces only are mentioned, asking why that should be; and he can say of them that they seem to be wholly exterior. That they stand at a distance will count with him; that they are only seen under closed eyelids will be no bar to the desired inference; and he will greatly rely upon what is, indeed, a curious matter: to wit, that the apparitions seem completely extraneous to the mental faculties which might alone be thought capable of producing them. Though the mind is falling into its own relaxations of slumber when the first phantom appears, it is then aroused, and, with all its wits in due array, becomes instantly intent on those that follow. It could do no more and no differently were it bent on examining some strange creature coming up from the sea. Neither is there any question of insanity—any question of dormant will or of imagination in disorder. For here we see will and imagination employed together on the other side, so to speak; as when they endeavour to recall some vanished phantom or strive to produce others in competition—trying their natural forces against

a power which seems alien and incomprehensible.

Keeping all belief in spirit-worlds at arm's length, I prefer the simple explanation that these apparitions have their origin in physical disturbance. Tired or disordered eyesight (yet on no occasion, for my part, has there been any consciousness of either) seems to be the most natural explanation; one good reason for it being that though the visions cannot be called up by the will nor dismissed by the same operation, they can be got rid of in a flash by opening the eyelids. But we have not got far when we have arrived at this conclusion. That tired or disordered eyesight should confuse or distort things seen, that in this condition it should retain under closed lids blurred visions of things lately looked upon, is comprehensible enough; but not that it should be delivered of images that have never found admittance to mortal eye. Neither is it easy to understand why the apparitions should be of human faces only, as M. Maury also testifies that they are; though in his case they were known faces, which is a great difference.

It will not be forgotten, of course, that brains affected by alcoholic poison do deliver to the organs of sight similar phantoms; and that is to some extent an enlightening analogy. Having no case to make out, and no other design than to enlarge and if possible to clarify an interesting psychological inquiry, I make no difficulty of allowing that this same enlightening analogy may run to a considerable extent. But where there is poisoning there is derangement; *delirium tremens* is derangement of a very pronounced and obvious character; and the apparitions which Mr. Galton and M. Maury discuss as remarkable are so because they cannot be traced to anything of the kind.

Yet excitement of course there may be, though entirely undiscoverable by our own observant senses. Every thought comes forth of a condition of nerve-excitement, for that matter, and of a certainty every dream. And my purpose is only to point out that the phantom faces and the more remarkable of those seen in dreams are alike in one significant particular. They are alike in this, that neither are the stored



record of things seen or heard of. Memory, being closely interrogated, replies that it knows nothing about them; and in neither case can they be evoked by the waking fancy, which works within the limitation of things seen and remembered. And they have this likeness although in the one case they are presented to the mind in sleep, when our faculties are in we know not what state of disorder; while in the other case they bring themselves under the inspection of the waking faculties in full attention: the account which these faculties render of them being that they are inexplicable as products of the mind itself. According to that account they are exterior to the mind, which combines all its faculties to examine and explain them precisely as if they belonged to the great variety of phenomena presented from the world without.

If we could conceive that our physical senses (not, of course, the exterior organs of sense, but our senses where they reside at the nerve-centres of the brain) have an independent faculty of imagination, 'faces in the dark' would become more intelligible.

There would still be difficulties about them, but we might then say, perhaps, that the visual sense having become over-excited or otherwise disordered, it casts up memory-impressions which are changed into something like creations by the magic of its own special and unincumbered imaginative power. And if that theory could be allowed, it might also help us to understand some of the more remarkable dream-visions. But before we pass on again to these, 'les hallucinations hypnogogiques' must be called back to re-deliver their most striking lesson.

It has been decided by the scientific that dreams are entirely profitless. My suggestion is that that is an undiscriminating mistake; and that imagination, which is a teaching faculty, reveals in dreams an originality and force far beyond all that it displays when we are awake. Now these 'faces in the dark' are products of imagination, by whatever process they are brought out; they are dream-like; and what they present they present (as I know them, at least, and it is not at all likely that my experience is singular) with almost intoler-

able force and loaded with instruction. If at this moment, for example, I wish to bring before my mental view the lineaments and expression of Avarice, the vision must needs be made up by the recollection of one or two representative persons. These memory-pictures may of course be heightened by an interpretative imagination if I happen to possess the gift in any effective quantity; and that can give some help. But amongst my 'faces in the dark' I have seen the Passions themselves; not with the faintness of memory-pictures, and not as peering through an obstructive mask of flesh like my own and my neighbour's, but stripped, and as if challenging regard in actual disembodiment. No doubt this will seem to many exaggerated and rhetorical language. The truth is that no words and no skill in using them can describe an intensity of meaning which is sometimes too vivid too invading, too terribly convincing to be borne.

Now this is obviously a remarkable achievement. In the first place it is an added proof that imagination holds within

itself a measure of pictorial strength and a range of capability which are not at our disposal for the work-a-day purposes of mind, even when those purposes are intellectual and divining. In the next place, it exhibits the imaginative faculties in a condition of all but absolute if not indeed of perfect independence. Lastly, it appears that in this condition they may be instructive in a very high degree, adding to our perceptions what could not be otherwise acquired. Taking these examples of 'faces in the dark,' it is as if some loftier denizen of the mind (we may fancy it a something corresponding in the intellectual domain to Conscience in the moral) did say, 'Your conception of the Spirit of Hate is very feeble—a farrago of abstract ideas, substantiated by partial experience and by glimpses of the passion here and there through a variety of wrappings and disguises. You shall see that spirit as it is: behold! And Envy; look again. And Scorn, and Greed, and Malignancy. And this—this is Patience; and this, Luxury; and this, naked Stupidity.'

At this point it is necessary, perhaps, to remind the reader of something which is often omitted from the discussion of dreams, —a something which certainly should not be forgotten when the dreams take a 'supernatural' character. It is, that though imagination may mislead, as electricity may destroy, it is by nature the revealing quality of the human mind. Revelation, the unveiling of hidden things, is its daily business. With all our thought for them, the commonest affairs of life would go in darkness and confusion but for the flashing of its light; and if we look above common affairs, we see that what imagination has done for Science (usually under the name of 'inspiration') goes so far beyond all that Science could do for itself that Reason is quite unable to explain its ways and means. By general admission—as shown by the familiar use of certain words and forms of language — imagination, inspiration, intuition do things in broad daylight that border on the supernatural; and therefore who should start from the question whether the same faculty may not do similar things in a more

wonderful way when it wakes to greater freedom in sleep?

And another point may be pressed upon attention before we go further. While pondering what is written above about faces in the dark, the reader probably remembered the common physiological explanation of such phenomena: nerve-disturbance through indigestion and the like. This account of them has to be admitted as possible, but not without proper restriction.

The truth is that if an unwholesome supper produces such phenomena, it does so only in the sense that a bird singing in the air produced Shelley's 'Ode to a Skylark.' This is not intended as a figure of speech, but as a literal statement, corrective of the physiological explanation of dreams. There was a noise in the air—the bird's song. Striking on the tympanum of Shelley's ear, the noise was conveyed to his brain, where it started certain vibrations. These vibrations acting on the mind-machinery—and especially on that part of it where imagination dwells—moved it in a certain way; whereby the machinery threw off many beautiful images

palpable to Shelley's vision, many beautiful thoughts being liberated at the same time. And of these he made the Ode; and the Ode is the thing. It might have been all nonsense. Thousands of odes to skylarks, started by the same noise, acting in the same way on similar machinery, have been such nonsense that nobody was ever allowed to hear of them. But this one was different, and is universally esteemed for what it happens to be. In precisely the same way an indigestible supper will create certain nerve-disturbances (only from within instead of from without), followed by agitations at the seat of intelligence in the brain. Whatever faculties are thereby aroused will then become active, and there will be dream-images and dramatic fancies; but whether these images and fancies and workings in general are nonsense or not is determined by what they are, and not by reference to the exciting cause which set the machinery at work to produce them.

But these matters are left for more adequate discussion in the paper on the Study of Dreams which follows this essay; these

pages being chiefly taken up by exemplifications of dream-phenomena.

III

THE mistake of assuming that dreams are all alike, and the probability that our mental faculties do work separately and independently when we dream, are illustrated by a kind of dreaming of which two examples are given from my own experience. The details of both were carefully noted at the time.

I dream that I am ill in bed, and that while talking to a child at my bedside I hear the voice of a nurse, newly arrived, who is speaking with some one in an ante-room. What the woman says I cannot distinguish, but am struck by the pleasant, cheerful, friendly tone of her voice, and (as we often do in like cases when we are awake) I fit the voice with a corresponding face and figure. Presently she comes to the foot of my bed; and, looking up to her, I am astonished at the incongruity of the woman's whole appearance and the voice of her. I expected to see

something quite different from this tall, finely-shaped, slender figure, surmounted by a strange sub-sinister face, very small, very pale, with eyes, eyebrows, and hair all of one colour—the colour of fresh gravel. Now, since it was I who imagined the face, why was I so much surprised at it—not expecting it, but confidently expecting something different?

Again, I dream of being insulted in the garden of an hotel. The man who insults me, in a sudden fit of passion which I do not understand, is wildly abusive; but after a little while, and with the gesture of a man in too violent a heat to trust himself further, he rushes off abruptly. Soon afterwards, and while I am still lingering in the garden, one of the hotel servants comes to me, and I understand him to say, 'He has repented.' Repented! It strikes me (in my dream be it understood) as a very unusual word for a waiter to employ in such a connection; but that remark gives way to a feeling of satisfaction that my abuser had become sorry for his rudeness so soon. More particularly I wish to know whether he is sufficiently

ashamed to send an apology. So I say, 'Repented, has he? What did he say?' 'No, no,' is the answer; 'he hasn't paid it!' meaning the bill for his entertainment, as I immediately understand.

If the only point for observation here were the conversation with the waiter, the dream would supply plentiful matter for thought. For it seems that what I myself put into the man's mouth I myself mistake for something different, the two phrases being easily mistaken the one for the other if indistinctly heard. 'He has repented.' 'He hasn't paid it.' No invention could contrive a couple of sentences more likely to pass for each other when addressed to the ear; and since my thoughts were running on the outrage to myself, I was of course prepared to make precisely this mistake. Nothing could be more natural. That is to say, nothing could be more natural if it were a passage in real life, with two individualities to work it out according to their own independent lights and purposes. But then it was not. The whole scene was designed and pieced together by one imagination: the strange

thing being that the waiter's sayings were the invention of the same mind which at the same moment successfully invented a lapse of hearing in order to misunderstand what the waiter was to say. Would jumping from one's own shadow be more difficult than such a feat, performed by the waking faculties? Or lifting oneself in a basket from the ground? The task is impossible to the point of absurdity; yet in my dream it was done, and done as if in ordinary course.

But this mystery is only part of a harmoniously-mysterious whole: what dramatists call 'the curtain' to a well-articulated little play. There is no distinguishing the dream at any point from the composition of a story in the mind of a novelist. But it is composed (in all likelihood within the space of forty seconds or thereabout) without thought, without reflection, without contrivance, or with none detectable by the contriving mind. It is only a part of the mystery that I, the author of the story, put into the waiter's mouth the words which I mistake for something quite different till I explain myself through him. It seems, too,

that I have knowledge of an unpaid bill which yet I know nothing about till I inform myself by the mouth of my own creature. Till then the violence of the gentleman in the garden (my own contrivance) remains incomprehensible to me; but now, now it is explained with the sudden *éclat* of an answer to a puzzling riddle. The gentleman's wrath was a comedy! I laugh as it bursts upon me—the author of the comedy—that he had got up a 'row' in order to escape in the bustle without paying his bill. A complete little story unsuggested by anything that had actually happened, and so coherent and orderly that it could not have been better designed had it been worked out by an anecdote-inventor at a dinner-table. And though it is a dramatic conception of my own mind, I am taken into it as an unwitting puppet of the piece; in which capacity I follow the development of the story in ignorance of what will come next, and wondering what it is all about.

There would be little to say of an experience like this, perhaps, were it singular. But judging from my own very limited

inquiry, it is by no means an uncommon sort of dream. Another example of its kind may be found among the Notes at the end of this book. Others will be remembered by its readers; many more would be, no doubt, but for inattention to the one remarkable thing about dreams. There is no lack of looking into them for what presage they may seem to yield; but should all appearance of prophecy be absent, the dream is dismissed, as a gold-finder groping in the bed of a stream might fling aside treasure which he had no thought of seeking. The treasure in this case is knowledge of ourselves—evidence of what our faculties may reach to; and therewith a lesson against haste in defining the impossible and denying the apparently miraculous.

To speak in less alarming detail, we may safely argue from the very distinctive character of these dreams that sleep-phenomena are subject to at least one common mistake. They are discussed nearly always as if they must needs have precisely the same origin, and as if no explanation of them can be acceptable which does not include every

variety. There is no likelihood of their being better understood till this error has been got rid of. Dreams differ very much in character as well as in significance; probably in origin too. Many are extremely trivial, having trivial provocations; and their enormous preponderance in frequency is no wonder and no singularity, considering that four-fifths of the ever-changing movements of the mind in our waking hours answer to suggestions no less trivial—no less trivial than a passing twinge of toothache, for example, or the beating of rain on the window. Crossing a room in the dusk, a man stumbles over a cushion, and violently kicks it aside with a flash of feeling indistinguishable from revenge for a personal affront. Turning over in bed as he lies asleep, the same gentleman grinds one ankle against the other, and the next moment is in irons at the command of a fiendish sea-captain. The motion of the mind is much the same on both occasions, not less absurd in the one case than in the other, and not more lasting: the main if not the only difference is in the strength and freedom

of imagination, which is much feebler in the waking state. But the poor gentleman can think, can speculate, and therefore has nobler moments than when he kicked the offending cushion, or when, struck by the fine flavour of the bacon at breakfast, his mind roams away to brood over the romantic immensity of Chicago pork factories; and, in like manner, his dreams o' nights are not always as meaningless as that of the fiendish sea-captain. Dreams differ. Some differ as much from others as sheer insanity differs from genius working in its most harmonious moods; and nothing will be made of them so long as we stipulate for an explanation applicable to all alike.

The dream above related seems also to testify in favour of the theory that some of our faculties take no part in the dramatic visions of the night, and it speaks yet more strongly for another supposition to be mentioned presently. Imagination working in detachment: up to a certain point the hotel-garden dream may be explained on that theory, which satisfies most students more fully than any other. Indeed, the whole

course and effect of that little drama seems to show one set of faculties (constructive) working in advance of the comprehension of others. To review the story is almost to see the mental faculties sundered; a loosening of their bonds of inter-union; a falling away from each other as it might be through the lapse into rest of Will, which, as it is known to us, is the laborious guide, controller, and steady driving-power of them all, at work when we are as unconscious of its efforts as we are of the play of muscle that keeps us upright.

Sensation itself gives evidence in the matter. It is a familiar experience that when drowsiness steals over us and we drop sleep-ward, we are conscious at that moment of a feeling which precisely answers to a loosening of mental bonds—a grateful, restful feeling, exactly corresponding with the relief of ten minutes before, when the tension of muscle was relaxed in lying down. And what happens when we wake? Why, then we are immediately aware of another sensation which is just what might be expected if our various faculties, slumbering for awhile

in independence and apart, rushed to link themselves together in their appointed places.

It is evident that these sensations corroborate each other strongly; and they are themselves corroborated by our knowledge of day-dreaming. In day-dreaming we do not sleep, but we are always conscious of dropping into a slumberous state of mind, which again is pleasant and restful, and again attended by a feeling as if the tie that binds our faculties in union had slackened, leaving some to disport themselves in greater liberty while others slumbered. The sensation is the same, indeed, whether we drowse to sleep or drowse into day-dreaming; and the same when we wake from sleep and when we rouse ourselves from a summer-day trance and say we will dream no longer. Moreover, these sensations are as much to be trusted as any that can be brought to the aid of psychological inquiry; and, severally and together, they make strongly in favour of the only plausible explanation which has yet been arrived at by the most studious investigators of dreaming.

Yet were they interrogated, its inventors would have to acknowledge that this explanation leaves much in doubt. If we suppose some of our faculties suspended in sleep (will slumbering, attention dormant, while imagination wakes to revel in perfect freedom), we certainly attain to some reasonable understanding of many dreams, if not of all. It is readily conceivable that under such conditions imagination may be capable of inventions, embellishments, distortions, combinations far more original than the waking sense can be spurred into producing. Readily conceivable, because again we have our experience of day-dreams to go upon, and we know by the fantasies that arise and expand in them that imagination is never so liberal as when it is relieved from the surveillance of its yoke-fellow qualities. Yet when all this is said, it appears that some dreams at any rate, and notably such dreams as are described on a previous page, throw doubt on the theory of suspended mental activities. The romances invented, the images called into the mind in sleep, *do* come under the observation of the faculties which are

supposed to limit and control the imagination when we are awake.

One recognised objection to the theory is that will cannot always be suspended in sleep, because we sometimes wake ourselves by a deliberate effort for the reasoned purpose of putting an end to a distressing dream. Neither is the lapse of attention complete. As we have already said, attention of some kind must be directed on these visions of the night, or there could be no record of them in the mind when we wake. But what sort of attention it may be we do not know. It is impossible to distinguish between (1) the kind and degree of attention under which a dream-vision was viewed, and (2) the kind and degree of attention bestowed on any matter of interest when we are awake. Yet that it can be very close and apprehensive in dreams seems manifest from the fact that we wake from a bad dream with all the symptoms of physical terror—heart beating, limbs trembling. In most cases, however, it must be in sleep an uncritical attention (for attention may be fixed and yet uncritical), as when it discovers

nothing strange in words, deeds, transformations which the waking mind recognises as absurd and impossible. But neither is attention always uncritical in sleep. It is sometimes brought to bear on dreams with the same discrimination which it employs when we are awake and in a theatre; though rarely, perhaps never, with the same closeness and continuity. But where the theory of imagination at work in perfect freedom becomes most difficult of acceptance is when it is considered in relation to the kind of dream instanced above. There all the gifts necessary to the construction of a dramatic sketch seem to have combined to give it a coherency, a consistency, an orderly development which the single detached faculty of imagination seems quite incapable of supplying.

And what are the necessary gifts? Were a dramatist asked which of his various mental endowments he could do without, he would probably find it difficult to name one. He would say that all are wanted; that the aid of all (in varying measure) is indispensable; and that certainly, however slight the

piece, it could not be begun without will or intention. But if these contributory faculties helped imagination to make up the garden story, how should the author be so much detached from the work as to be unaware of the plot of it while it was being constructed in his own mind? It is seen that observation, reflection, reasoning, were awake and active in the dreamer's head equally with imagination; and that though those faculties tried to do so, they failed to comprehend what they contributed to invent or to shape. It is as if Sheridan wondered while he was writing his *School for Scandal* why on earth a screen was to be placed on the stage in Act III., and found out the purpose with a shock of surprise when he caused the screen to fall.

Yet that there is truth in the detachment theory seems probable in the highest degree. It is borne out by the positive, the unmistakable experiences of day-dreaming, and is largely favoured by the fact that the pictures made up by memory or imagination in sleep are far more vivid than any that appear to the waking fancy, or even in half-slumberous

day-dreams. It would seem that, freed from the restraint imposed on it when it has to work in harness with other faculties, imagination becomes infinitely more active, powerful, impressive.

The difference in point of distinctness between the images that appear in dreams and those which we call into the mind, or that wander into it when we are awake, is extremely great, as every one knows who is possessed of an active fancy. Even when, the moment after looking intently on a house, a tree, a face, we close our eyes and recall it to mental vision, we find the impression faint and weak as compared with similar appearances in dreams. Yet the one kind of mental apparition is immediately derived from actual existing things ; the other (very often) has no such derivation that we can recognise. Or if they be really memories, they are distant memories—week old, year old, dating backward by decades ; and yet far more plain to the visual sense within us than the fields we have just closed our eyes upon. They are dim by comparison ; and equally so are the pictures

which as artists, novelists, and the like, we set up in our minds. They present themselves just as memory-pictures do—in the same faint outline which cannot be steadied and held in view without some degree of effort: to every sense they are 'shadows, unsubstantial things.' It is altogether different with dream-pictures. Not only do they appear in much greater clearness, but it is as if the actual sight of the dreamer were addressed to real objects, which it looks forth at. Only the eyes of the mind are employed, of course; but all the vast difference that we acknowledge between mental and actual vision disappears, and with it the sensation of looking at reflections in a camera. There is no such sensation as that in our dreams.

It seems from all this that imagination does attain in sleep a freedom which not only enables it to work with enormously increased pictorial force, but develops 'creative' resources which the utmost urging cannot bring it to reveal in waking day. As for that, however, the waking imagination can hardly conceive itself capable of

surrendering the creations of which it is freely delivered in slumber. It knows its comparative impotence in the one state, and hesitates to believe its own powers in the other.

But perhaps the minds of children offer the strongest illustration of the theory that dream-imagination is so powerful because it operates in detachment from other qualities—those of the criticising, suppressive, disciplinary kind. In childhood there is no such mutual supervision of the mental faculties as there is in the adult. For in the first place some of them lack development—they have yet to grow. And inasmuch as their other faculties *have* come to growth in children, they have yet to be linked in the closer association that binds them when they come to maturity. What is called the 'knitting' of our bodily frames has its counterpart in the knitting of the mind ; a process which is only at its beginning in childhood. Both retrospection and observation declare that at this time of life our faculties work more independently of each other than when we are grown up, or

till we come to the second childhood of old age ; and no adept can doubt that the waking imagination of children shows a near approach to the spontaneity and vividness of fancy-production in dreams. Their make-believe goes far beyond all that we can command. Imagination places its creations and transformations before their eyes with much of the objectivity with which they are presented to us in sleep alone when we grow older, and when our various gifts are brought into more complete co-ordination.

It will be seen that these observations are all to the point, and others strengthen them. Briefly, the saying that 'Genius is to madness near allied' imports the same idea—imagination comparatively unhampered by the restraint of other and more pedestrian faculties. And with that consideration another should be taken, for it has a strong bearing on this part of the subject : It is the common experience of men of genius that their noblest 'thoughts,' their keenest intuitions, seem to flash into the mind from without rather than to spring up from within. They seem to proceed from some inde-

pendent agency external to mind and yet at home in it ; which is just what might be said of dreams. And madness being mentioned, another remark occurs. Insanity is robbed of half its terrors by the extremely probable supposition that the state of madness is a state of constant dreaming ; and wherever insanity appears it certainly seems that the mental faculties have fallen apart from each other, and that imagination takes full possession in unbridled strength.

IV

We have here a strong array of evidence for the imagination-in-detachment theory, which I think will hold ; but not without considerable ekings, or perhaps without transformation absolute. For unless it may be assumed that imagination has far more tremendous powers than have ever yet been allowed to it—unless, that is to say, it is capable of simulating effectually, or of developing in itself, nearly all the other qualities of mind—this theory does not

suffice to explain 'proleptic' dreams; such as the garden dream and the dream of the Queen's palace, which is told in the Notes.

And now comes in another point for remark. So far as we know, neither the freer imagination of childhood nor the absolutely unfettered faculty in madness is ever productive of the kind of dreams which are called supernatural, for want of a word more accurately expressive. These are the most remarkable phenomena of sleep; and it appears that prophetic dreams, or dreams which seem to import something of the supernatural, only arise in sane minds. Moreover, they do not appear in these till the mental qualities have come to full growth, and are brought into a condition of close inter-dependence. But if so, then supernatural dreams are eminently worthy of consideration in any attempt to survey the scope and boundary of the human mind.

Dreams which have all the character of prophecy and revelation do undoubtedly occur; and it would add much to their importance as mind-products were there reason to believe—as there seems to be from

the observations above mentioned — that they are not amongst those which are produced by imagination alone, and when the reasoning faculties may be suspected of stupefaction in sleep. At liberty to reject the detachment theory so far as these dreams are concerned, we may advance to another; which, though it is new (I fancy), will stand examination as well as most. It is possible that these dreams arise when not one but all of the mental faculties are lifted into a higher range of freedom, at the same time maintaining their accustomed harmony. That, indeed, is what men of genius would say happens to them whenever their minds are working at their largest and best; which is an additional reason for accepting this explanation of the strangest of dream-phenomena. Nor is there anything against it in the fact that imagination is still dominant: that is only what we should expect. Naturally it is imagination that speaks in these dreams as in others—its speech being fable and picture. The wonder appears when it speaks or acts as if endowed with independent powers of reflection and reasoning,

—powers which it brings to bear, instructively, on those other gifts of reflection and reasoning that belong to the work-a-day machinery of mind.

Since it seems necessary to illustrate this more remarkable kind of dreaming, I will relate one of a series of dreams which followed each other at intervals of a year precisely—a year to a day.

A long time ago, a gentleman who may be called A. lost a child by death. He had been very fond and proud of the boy, who was seven or eight years old, I think, when he died. Indeed, between the two there had always been a strong sympathy, and when the child was taken the father was plunged into the deepest grief. Like many another in the same situation, his thoughts by day and night were tortured by the question, 'But yet is he still in existence? Is there a place in this vast universe where I may think of him as living—no matter how infinite the distance, or even if we are parted not only now but for ever and ever?' Many poor souls have been tossed about in the same yearning speculations day after day, month

after month, with no diminution of doubt and pain. A. was one of the most unfortunate.

And to this great trouble was added another, which took the shape of a deep and surprising disappointment. At first, one of the poor man's very few comforts was that the boy would haunt his dreams, and that they would be together many a time that way. But it is not invariably true that what you think of most you dream of most; and for all his hoping and praying the father never once dreamt of his son. He never had any such dream for a whole year; by which time, I daresay, the praying had been given up and the hope exhausted. But then, on the morning of the anniversary of the child's death, and at the very hour at which he died, the father woke from a wonderful dream, so intimately and touchingly responsive to the whole year's grief that it cannot be thrown into the glare of print. It is only mentioned, together with the fact that after another twelve months of blank and empty nights another dream of the same character occurred at the same hour, in order to give its own setting to the third dream.

The morning had again come round. A. dreamed that he had awakened about dawn, and, thinking of nothing but the hour to rise, had drawn his watch from under his pillow. In doing so he saw that it had been completely shattered. But how could it have been broken so violently, lying where it had been snugly placed a few hours before? A reasonable but an injurious conjecture occurred to him: at some time in the night the watch had been taken from beneath his pillow by his wife, who had allowed it to fall. Satisfied that there could be no other explanation, he was about to drop asleep again, to get rid of ill-humour at the accident (this is all in the dream, be it understood), when the door opened and in came a foreman of works to whom A. gave instructions every day, and between whom and himself there was a great liking. It seemed as if the man had come for the usual draft of work to be done, and it did not strike A. as anything out of the way that he should be visited in his bedroom for it. But he *was* struck by the mysterious look of inquiry on the man's face. The next moment he connected this look with the broken

watch, and drew it out again; the glass gone, the hands swept from the dial, but seeming less like his own watch now. What was the meaning of it? While A. was asking himself the question in a sort of expectant trepidation, the foreman of works said, 'Put it to your ear, sir,' meaning, of course, the broken watch. This A. did; and as he listened to the even beat within, the other said, 'Sir, we know how much you are troubled, and this is our way of showing you that though every sign of life is destroyed life may still be going on.'[1] Whereupon A. woke all of a tremble, heard the tranquil tick-ticking of his watch under his pillow, and when he could compose himself to take it forth, saw that the hands stood at within five or eight minutes of the time when his boy died on the same day in the calendar.

When such dreams as these visit us (and this one is told quite faithfully, without a word of omission, importation, transposition,

[1] The 'we' and the 'our' here were understood to signify that the kindly plot had been got up not by the foreman alone, but in concert with those employed under him.

or embellishment) they make an impression on the mind which no reasoning can efface. Anxious as we may be to assert our emancipation from superstitious ideas, confident as we may be that the dream is and must be explicable by some morbid condition of organic function or some mysterious 'association of thought,' no sooner is attention withdrawn from that conclusion than belief in the supernatural creeps back to replace it. And as often as it is expelled it will return—shadowy but inexpugnable, or expugnable only for a while. It comes back again and again like an exile to its home, where the reasonings that chase it away are as foreigners and conquerors. It may be that it has no right to exist in the mind at all; but the mind itself feels that the yearning to supernatural belief is more truly native than the mental forces which forbid it to remain.

It should be no surprise if a reasonable study of the subject led to the conclusion that dream-revelations are not the fiction or the misinterpreted fortuity which scientific men insist they are. Why may not some of

them be supernatural in the sense that imagination has a range of power far beyond what is thought natural to it, or that Reason can account for with comfort to itself? From time immemorial the power has been felt, and acknowledged as the gift of seers and prophets under the name of second-sight, supernatural inspiration, divine intimation. It is now denied altogether; but since any one may declare a belief in Intuition (and what is that?) without being called superstitious, why may not the existence of this same mysterious power under the name of Imagination be allowed? There is no superstition in that, though justice to the old beliefs must concede that A.'s dream is more plausibly explained by a whisper from without than by the operation of our natural faculties. How ridiculous it is to dismiss such dreams as the mere consequence of physical disturbance—indigestion and the like—will be seen in the following essay; but neither can they be accounted for by a disorganised state of mind in which the inventive faculties have unrestricted liberty. Disorder, disorganisation are forbidden words

in the case of A.'s dream, where all the more remarkable characteristics of the proleptic dream appear in combination with others still more impressive.

There again we view the mind of a man creating a drama in which he himself—that is to say, his whole conscious being, all that he ever called 'myself'—is made to play a part, while yet he has to follow the development of the story in ignorance of its every turn. Not in idle ignorance either, but in striving and baffled ignorance; for he was eagerly curious to make out the incidents of the dream as they arose, and even came to wrong conclusions about them at one stage of their evolution, after calling upon imagination itself to enlighten him. And these incidents were——? His own inventions; or, if not, whose?

As to that particular, however, the vision was no more than a strikingly illustrative example of a kind of dreams which are commonly meaningless, except as they witness to a latent unsuspected strength and facility in our mental endowments. But, together with that characteristic, the dream

has others of great significance, howsoever viewed. It is marked by one difference which places it in a far higher region of 'sleep's imaginings.' Apparently, a reasoned purpose had to be achieved; and when I say 'apparently' it is only in deference to the all but universal feeling that there can be no reasoning and no purpose in dreams. The truth is that unless the ordinary processes of judgment are inapplicable to dream-phenomena, the conclusion is unavoidable that here a reasoned purpose had to be achieved—as much by set design as when Nathan made up his parable of the ewe-lamb. And it was achieved; for the dreamer was more at peace from that hour than he had been for many a month before.

But the question is persistent: At peace through his own persuasions, his own divinations? Unless we yield to the supposition that they were inspired from without we must needs answer Yes; accounting as best we may for the persuasions being arrived at in a dream and not by the set processes of thought. Yet were A. asked whether the design and purpose of the dream were his

own he would answer that they were as strange to him when they were put in operation as the parable was to David when Nathan began to speak. Further he would answer that they seemed to him, when he woke, as foreign to himself and as much of a surprise as the fable of the Jewish prophet could have seemed to the Jewish king. And yet what but A.'s own mind—which is A. himself—invented the design and directed the purpose? What, indeed, but his whole mind, with all its parts working together in due contribution and in full accord?

It is barely conceivable that so much contrivance—for an end, apparently, which must itself have been the subject of complicated feeling and thought—could be planned and carried out by any single attribute of mind, no matter what magic it may be capable of when liberated from the control of the rest. To do as much as that, imagination, the one faculty to which all dreaming is referred, must be capable of far more than an extension of its powers when in a state of detachment. Recalling an hypothesis which was flown from a previous page, we must suppose

imagination able to develop in itself, on occasion, nearly all the other mental faculties, including will or intention: qualities, be it observed, of which it is more the servant than anything else while we are awake.

That imagination is capable of so much as this is a fascinating conjecture, but one that few will accept. It would be easier to confide in the other theory, and believe that such dreams as A.'s occur when not imagination alone but all the faculties of mind, released from the drag of the corporeal senses, soar into a higher range of freedom while still maintaining their natural relations in full harmony. If one contributory to the mind-machine can exert extraordinary powers in the relaxations of sleep, may not others? May they not do so sometimes—by accident, on rare occasions—concordantly with imagination and each other though moving in a larger orbit of action? If so, much would be accounted for, and yet no great wonder would be added to the wonders amidst which we move from the moment we begin to think of what mind is and how we come by it.

But there is another guess, and one that puts less strain on apprehension. It is easy to imagine the mind of man dual—its faculties supplied in a double set. Duality seems to be a common law in Nature. The brain, which is the mind-machine, is itself a dual organ; and nearly all the difficulty of understanding dreams would disappear if we could believe that our mental faculties are duplex, and that though the two sets work together inseparably and indistinguishably while we live our natural lives in the waking world, they are capable of working apart, the one under the observation of the other more or less, when all are out of harness by the suspension of the senses in sleep.

On this supposition the more inexplicable peculiarities of the hotel-garden dream and the like would lose their mystery; and a great deal of what is called the supernatural in dreams would also be accounted for, perhaps. But there again we enter upon dubious matter. For my own part, I have no doubt that dreams of warning and prevision do occur, and I could speak as to some with the utmost confidence. And so, I believe,

could many others, were they not withheld by considerations of which one at least can hardly be gainsaid. It is not that whosoever expresses belief or half-belief in the supernatural character of dreams exposes himself to ridicule, though that is reason enough. No doubt, were a religion to be vindicated, or any sort of gain to be got, the risk of inviting attention to some dream as one which no acknowledged natural agency seemed capable of explaining would be dared pretty often ; but what inducement is there to rush into publicity and suspicion with a trivial story like this that follows—declaring that I think it 'very curious'?

I make a very early call on some familiar friends. They are lingering at breakfast later than seems reasonable, and one young lady has not yet come down. But down she comes a few minutes afterward, to be jokingly reproached for laziness. She is not without excuse, however, if dreaming may account for late lying abed ; for she instantly plunges into the relation of a dream about Aunt Susan, who lives in the country, it seems. 'I half expected to find her here,'

says the young lady, 'my dream was so plain and everything just as it would be.' Aunt's boxes outside the cab as she drove up are then described, and the abundance of small parcels inside the cab, every one of them to be handled with special care; 'and it was so funny to see her turning the things out of her reticule the moment she came in, strewing them all over the table; her handkerchief, and her smelling-salts, and her purse, and—yes!—a paper-bag with crumbs; and a nice scatter they made!' And so forth, and so forth. Ten minutes afterwards a cab with luggage on the roof drives up to the door; and I myself see Aunt Susan enter the room, carrying a large old-fashioned 'reticule' bursting with small sundries, of which a paper that might have been a confectioner's bag was evidently one.

Is it worth while to tell of trivial and pointless dreams like this out of the family circle, or even to tell them there as if they offered matter for serious consideration? To be sure, had the visitor foreseen in this dream been Death mounting the stair in cowl and shroud, instead of an auntish old lady

descending from a cab with a velvet bag on her arm, it would have been no more wonderful as a precognition of the human mind. That, however, is a consideration to which no weight is allowed; and for the rest, such dreams can always be explained away by resolute disbelief in them. In this case, for example, is it certain that the young lady was not in the secret of Aunt Susan's unannounced visit to town? The question asked, the dream is disposed of. I am conscious of looking foolish, and resolve to say no more about curious dreams unless they are of a romantic cast, and not then without the smile that deprecates credulity.

In this way a good deal of evidence is suppressed that would be useful in studying the action of mind in sleep; but more important suppressions are due to another motive. All dreaming is not of trivialities, though of course most of it is—for the reason that our minds and thoughts are compounded of little else than small solicitudes and trivial speculations. Yet there are exceptions—as rare, perhaps, as crises of thought or of fate, but known to many and signally

informing ; but when such dreams do occur they are generally of such a nature that they cannot be told, however much they may seem to abound in new and convincing significancies. They belong too much to ourselves ; they are bound up too much with episodes and accidents, memories and affections, which are shrouded even from our own contemplation as long as we are not alone. To hand out for public exhibition and debate what is too sacred for our own thoughts except in lonely times and solitary places is beyond the impossible ; and science is sufficiently at one with kindness to shrink from asking any such sacrifice. But we may be sure that a vast deal of very cogent illustration is thereby kept out of the inquiry.

The reader's humble servant who writes this, which is meant to urge and help inquiry, cannot himself overcome reluctance to tell of dreams which seem to him profoundly suggestive—perhaps conclusive—if the question is whether our minds have or have not a power of divination beyond what is meant when we speak of intuitive faculties. And so it is that A., whose dream of the watch

has been quoted, will tell nothing of the two previous dreams that fell on the same day of the year; though we see how he describes their general meaning and effect. But there was a fourth dream years and years after those others; and in so far as it bears on their periodical occurrence on the morning of the child's death (which seems to suggest what would be called supernatural visitation)—mention of it is permitted.

The fourth dream occurred a quarter of a century after the third, which was the watch dream. Not once in the interval had A. dreamed of his son. On this last occasion the vision was as clear and as impressive as the others, and full of meaning expressed darkly in a noble dramatic form. Of course such visitations must needs be disturbing; and as A. sat in after-dinner idleness with one of his kinsfolk next evening, the dream recurred to him and he became lost in thought about it. By-and-by his absorption must have been manifest; for his kinswoman asked what he was thinking of. She was answered, of a wonderful dream, and of whom; upon which she said, 'Why, don't

you know what day it is?'—Again the anniversary dream, after twenty-five years of interruption and although he had forgotten the day! And since he had forgotten the day, whose memory was it that inspired the dream, or what magic of imagination framed it so wittingly for that morning of all mornings of the year?

The authorship of these surpassing dreams —dreams that surpass all that we can believe ourselves capable of planning and informing with so much meaning, beauty, terror—must either be our own or else must come from without. The Spirit of the Age forbids belief in exterior influences as mere superstition. But fancy is free, and we are at liberty to please ourselves with the conjecture that when our mental faculties are discharged of their duty in sleep, resting like harps from which the hand has been withdrawn, some spiritual influence may come in and take possession, turning them to its own uses. It is at least a pretty poetical kind of notion, fruitful of pleasure as flowers are or a song, of which none can make a meal. And the physiologist himself

is bound to support it from his knife-and-scalpel knowledge. An honest man, he will admit that the supposed spiritual intelligence need not break in like a thief. He knows his nerve-systems, and his nerve-centres in the brain of a man, which is the study, workshop, and theatre of mind; and he will say that so little violence is needed to stir imagination, or to move and direct the springs of thought, that they will answer to a touch light as the passing of a shadow over the harp-strings of our simile. Just so light, then, may be the touch of the spiritual intelligence. But if, nevertheless, this fancy and all such must be dismissed, we are forced back upon the first alternative. The authorship of these dreams is all our own; in which case the human mind has powers which it cannot recognise as pertaining to itself, neither can it comprehend them.

V

WHEN dreams like these are discussed by believers in an origin which, though conceivably within the laws of Nature, is

unacknowledged by science, some subtle communication of mind with mind at a distance is assumed as the explanation of a great deal. There certainly seems to be some subtle communication of minds with minds *not* at a distance, but yet locked from each other in a silence which we are used to think impenetrable as long as it remains quite unbroken. Though, for example, the experience I am about to mention may not happen to anybody more than once or twice in a lifetime, it has a lasting place in many memories. You are walking with another person, your friend, or perhaps more than your friend; no stranger in thought or feeling at any rate. You have reached with him the unbearable topmost height of some dangerous dispute, some desperate difference. There is a dead silence; then presently, as if in a sudden expansion of the silence, you *hear* a thought in your friend's mind, and hear it, to your conviction, in the very words it is framed in. He says this or this in his heart (forming some impulsive resolution, probably), and the unbreathed words are as plain to you as to himself.

This is a well-tested experience, and in all likelihood not an uncommon one. And since such very distinct 'waves of communication' do flow from mind to mind at a little distance, it is no unreasonable guess that they may sometimes extend farther. Some psychological inquirers have no doubt that they do; and supposing them right, many dreams which, though by no means rare, are strangely significant, become immediately comprehensible. This one, for example; which is not related for its singularity, but only as illustrative of the kind of dreams which are explained by wave-communication. After a brief absence from home a certain man returns very late at night. On his table he finds a letter from a lady who was at one time a close acquaintance of himself and his family, but whom he has not seen for many months. The letter is to this effect:—'I know that you used to believe in me as something of a witch, and so I take courage to tell you of a dream that has impressed my own mind enough to make it restless. It is on my conscience to tell you. I dreamt last night that So-and-so (naming a very

dear friend of her correspondent's) was ill—dying, indeed; and that he was calling for you, and exclaiming that you must go to see him before seven o'clock.' Now the recipient of the letter knew that his friend was ill, but had no reason to believe that the case had become desperate. Nevertheless the message disturbed him greatly, and all the more because it was now two o'clock in the morning, and he had no idea but that the 'witch's' seven o'clock pointed to that hour of the previous evening. And perhaps it did so in her own mind; but however that may have been, the poor man died unvisited by his friend at about seven o'clock on the morning when the letter was received.

This is the 'wave-of-communication' dream, the like of which has been told so many times that it has become commonplace. The custom is to believe such dreams true and strange when they happen to ourselves, and to doubt them altogether when they happen to anybody else. Much the same thing meets the view in a very different field of observation. When a man is in love himself he thinks nothing more serious in

the world; when he sees another man in love he thinks nothing more ridiculous. I myself confess to little interest in wave-communication dreams, looking beyond them to more mysterious matter. But that may be found even here, as will plainly appear from the dream I am about to relate—one that would be strange indeed if it happened to be singular. There is no singularity in any such experiences.

Between a certain man and woman—both of a rather romantic cast—a strong affection had grown up from childhood; an affection very much tried but never quenched, nor, apparently, ever diminished. Through a variety of commonplace mistakes and hindrances they could not marry. They had to remain apart, and nearly always at a distance; but with communication enough to be assured from time to time over ten or twelve years that the old affection remained what it was at the beginning. Towards the end of this period the man was tormented by a series of dreams, occurring at intervals of days, weeks, and months, in which the woman figured as avowing herself 'false as Cressid'

and shamelessly glorying in her freedom. 'Tormented' was his own word; but not because these dreams ever disturbed his faith for a single waking moment. Indeed, he described himself (to me; I was his confidant or confessor at the time, and therefore can speak to the truth of this relation) as puzzled and humiliated that such phantasies should invade his mind by any avenue or in any shape. The torment was felt no longer than the dream lasted, or till he had shaken off the horror he woke in. It was not surprising to hear, however, that the repetition of these visions during a space of two or three years became increasingly distressing, and the more so because their only difference was in scene and circumstance. There was a casual meeting, now on a country road, now on a sea-side parade, now at a garden-party; but whatever the place of meeting the same thing happened on all occasions. With a defiant gaiety, and with a 'Now, do you suppose?' or a 'Why, dear me, yes!' or 'Are you so stupid as to imagine?' she scattered confessions as lightly as if she were flinging roses. The lady died, and when she

was dead the leaves of a sealed book opened (how, need not be told) revealing what no one expected to read in it, and all in accordance with her lover's dreams. Not that there were any signs of the pagan audacity that was so amazing in *them*; but, on the contrary, tokens of violent passions of remorse, frequently recurrent.

Little help from superstition is needed to impress one with a story like this. It should be marked that R.'s persistent dreams were not accounted for by doubt, by jealousy, or by anything seen or heard that could sow the seed of suspicion. Nothing that was native to his own mind suggested them; they were dreams of intimation from without, if any such there be. And yet in explaining them by the wave-of-communication hypothesis an extremely curious and interesting difficulty has to be encountered. It is almost inconceivable that even in her most mute and secret musings, the unhappy woman could have wished to present herself to her lover's mind as she did appear to him in sleep. To be sure, the psychologist or the poet may make something of it, as

the communication of a wild and impulsive remorse. We know that remorse will sometimes drive a sensitive nature to extravagant lengths of self-condemnation and self-punishment; and if the poet chose, he could make a pretty picture of the poor lady overcome at times with violent shame at her deceit —her mind straining with a wish that he might be defrauded of his confidence no longer, and going forth to him in an excess of penitence and extravagant self-revelation. It is quite credible, and quite in accord with what is known of human nature and human conduct. For some men and women, self-accusation of the most merciless kind answers to an act of atonement; it is confession and penance at the same time. This is the explanation of a great deal in Carlyle's little book written after his wife's death.

VI

WHETHER, putting aside all question of warning, or revealing, or prophetic sleep-visions, dreams are of service to the dreamer

has often been discussed ; the general opinion being that they are quite valueless in this respect. The truth is that, like books in Greek or Portuguese, they are valueless to as many as find them so. The experience from which opinion is drawn differs widely ; besides, as we have already said, this is a matter in which most men are resolutely suspicious of the experience of others. It is no less absurd to compare the dreaming of one man with that of another, than to assume in all mankind an equal capacity for composing music. I find in some an inveterate disinclination to believe that *any* dream—especially if it includes various scenes and many incidents—can be as orderly and natural throughout as if it were really a passage in real life ; yet there are other some, and by no means extraordinary people either, whose dreams are often of that character, without repeating actual scenes and events in a single particular.

Nearly all dreams, however, can be brought into one theory — namely, that since in dreams we pass through a great variety of experiences, none of which are

ever likely to befall us in life, we may be put to tests of character which would never try us otherwise; and therefore that we ought to come by this means into a better acquaintance with ourselves. If, for example, I have never been placed in a position of extreme danger—as by attack of armed thieves, or in a burning house with others more helpless than myself—how am I to know what my feelings and conduct would be in such circumstances? Think of himself what he may, no candid man with a general knowledge of human nature can give a confident answer to that question. It is a common experience to find in oneself a surprising coolness and resource, or a totally unsuspected and crushing cowardice, under a sudden severe test. To some such test, it has been surmised, we are frequently exposed in dreams. Here we are assailed by perils which seem imaginary neither to intelligence nor sense. While they endure we pass through emotions strong enough to affect our physical senses no less than if the danger were real (as broken knuckles and quaking limbs attest when we wake), and

therefore all the more to be trusted as like to those which we should feel were the dream a reality.

If this supposition held good there could be no doubt about the common usefulness of dreams. Anybody can dream of being attacked by burglars, or of being immured in a burning house, or of struggling with others to escape from a sinking ship. Manifold trials of this kind are prepared for every man that sleeps ; and supposing them to be really instructive, really enlightening and edifying, they might well be fancied as brought into the scheme of Nature by beneficent design. Only by the aid of imagination do we apprehend the sorrow and suffering, or perhaps the grief and the remorse, unapportioned to ourselves ; and it is well that they should be apprehended to the full for our own sakes, as well as for any good that a sympathetic understanding of our fellow-creatures may be. And the conjecture is that the fireside musings of imagination are helped out by the intense dramatic force with which it casts us into scenes of trial indistinguishable from reality, which we

not only see but share. And not only into scenes of trial, as it might be in a 'forlorn hope' or on a raft at sea. We sometimes dream of passing into conditions of temptation and guilt such as it is hardly possible we shall ever fall into; and so we taste of both in a measure which cannot be acquired from novels and newspapers.

To illustrate my meaning, I must revert to my own experience.

Many years ago I dreamed of having killed a man by throwing him from the verge of an old, unfrequented quay. The murder itself did not come into the dream, which began (according to my waking remembrance) just after I had turned from the scene. It might have been a dream of horror as well as guilt—of horror, the torment of which, we may suspect, is often tempered by the thought of it as a punishment that atones. But the deed being out of sight, so to speak, in my case horror there was none. The dream was of guilt alone; and whenever I review that vision of myself stealing away through the old streets that bordered the quay (it was early morning and

the streets were bathed in a thin clear slanting light), and when I recall my sensations, the whole mind of me an abyss of listening silence, my very footsteps seeming noiseless, and a wide environment of distance standing between me and every passer-by, I believe I really do know the awful solitude a murderer feels, or know it far beyond mere imagining.

Now no man can be the worse, he must be benefited in every sense by such experiences. They are expansion, enlightenment, discipline; and they fall to everybody's share. But though they usually have that advantage in some shape, this kind of dream cannot be depended on for revealing us to ourselves. If sometimes they do, on other occasions we say and do in them what by no persuasion can we think natural or possible so long as we keep our wits about us. But though dream-adventure cannot be thought trustworthy as a test of character, it has its uses in that respect—for some natures more than others, of course; and there can be no doubt that it brings us to the experience of emotions which would be otherwise known feebly

or not at all. The dream above related is no proof that if I did commit murder I should feel as I felt then ; but it was a most impressive, a most terrible and convincing lesson in what a murderer naturally feels when he is not a born assassin. If, beyond the entertainment it affords, there be any use in literature, any use in the novelist's pictures, the poet's revelations, the dramatist's embodiment and display of human feeling, it must be something to have the stage erected in our own breasts, the scene our own lives, the stir of emotion and passion our own in situations of acute trial and intense meaning.

And there is a quieter domain, regions purely intellectual and perceptive indeed, where imagination serves us to a wonder in dreams. An illustration of what I mean came into the experience of a lady who dreamed one night that she was in heaven, but in no new scene. It was the heaven of the old Italian painters. The celestial plains lay before her, and, viewing them, her sight was carried over so vast a space, her eyes saw into such immensities of distance, that

the infinite has been ever since far more comprehensible to her than it was before. Her vision had travelled into it; and the memory of the voyage remaining with her, it enabled her to think of eternity also with a diminished sense of frustration. Can that be called an idle dream which brings to an imaginative mind a fuller and more lasting conception of infinitude than philosophy could attain to by centuries of thought?

There is so much reluctance to mention any dream in implied belief that it may mean something, that I must go to my own store for another illustration: it shall be the last.

One night, when I was a boy, I dreamed of a very beautiful landscape. At that time I had never seen under the sky anything to compare with it for beauty; a matter of small consequence, however, when three fields, a pond, a flowering hedge, and a group of trees were enough to make a Garden of Paradise any day. But I had seen pictures, Turner engravings, and the like, and no doubt it was these that imagination took in hand when it showed me more loveliness in a single view than earth can offer to the

eye's embrace. But that seems too much to say—exaggerate, ungrateful; and in truth the magic was rather in the vision than the view. It was a scene in which all that is most beautiful in the valley-landscape of this land came together in an immensity of range. A valley of no great depth as measured by its extent, but one that might have been proportioned to the whole western sky as viewed from a hill at sundown. Its breadth was the breadth of two Wensleydales, two Swaledales, and three vales of Festiniog and valleys of the Wye; with the loveliness of all of them in terraced rock, hanging woods, deep meadows, and winding waters. And as you looked down the valley, an unending succession of *distances*.

This was the wonder of the scene; and here it was that the Genius of Dreams, the omnipotent Imagination which I sing, gave to my vision a magic which I do not suppose was ever conceived of by waking thought. Distance rose upon distance, each in its own boundary, so to speak, as the eye travelled on from one to the other. As I gazed down the valley from where I stood, the

general view melted in the long, gently-streaming gradations of perspective that may be seen on any clear day in any open landscape; but there was this difference. When I looked onward to some mile-away spot, half lost in soft obscurity, the haze immediately began to lift, light entered into the obscure, and this was now my *foreground*, with a foreground's clearness and particularity. As a natural consequence, the distance beyond took a new aspect of gradation. The bridge which a moment ago, when I began to look fixedly at it to make it out, lay far down the river, was now at my feet. I could see the wagon slanting down from the crown of it, and watch the cattle in the fields that sloped to the stream on either side. But no sooner was attention withdrawn from this spot than I insensibly fell back to my first standpoint. The newly-opened scene closed; and in a moment the bridge and all about it were again in the dim poetic distance of a master more masterly than Claude: and so it was to every point in the landscape. Going forth to any part with curiosity, my vision carried within itself the

same light. Though the place seemed miles away, every detail opened to view when it was looked upon intently, and then was lost again in the general beauty of the scene.

No painter could give me that actual visual experience and the memory of it, nor could anything in Nature but imagination in a dream. Through the splendidly creative power of that faculty when it is supposed to be in disorder and ridiculous, I have had such uses of sight as a millionaire might reasonably buy with a little fortune were they a marketable commodity ; and not only do they remain to me as a constant memory, with all the pleasure which the remembrance of any wonderful and beautiful thing can give, but as a lasting aid to fancy whenever it is my luck to view a far-reaching valley scene like that in my dream.

VII

HERE we may make an end of this rambling discourse, the intention of which is plain enough, I hope. It is not to reinstate a

superstitious interpretation of dreams, or to encourage the practice of searching into them for omens as fortune-tellers pry into the lees of a cup of tea. The purpose is to show cause for a more liberal, a more comprehensive, and at the same time a more discriminating treatment of dreams whenever they are inquired into. As it is, the inquiry is almost invariably approached either in the spirit of the old superstition or in the new spirit of materialism and mockery. Dreams have neither interest nor meaning for the one if they do not disclose the operation of supernatural agencies, impalpable influences from without; the other is narrowed into a predetermination to believe in the dissecting knife, the microscope, and the galvanic battery as the only interpreters of Man to himself. Each spirit has an own rewarding delight to look to: the supernaturalist revelling in a mysticism deliciously haunted with fearsomeness; the other never so pleased as when it can show the glory and mystery of sight lodging in a dirty little patch of eye-pigment, or when it tracks the brightest hopes, joys, and inspirations of a life to some other

secretion: and each goes astray after its particular enjoyments.

Dreams are best studied as manifestations of mind, and above all for the most mysterious and powerful of its faculties, memory and imagination. The notion that all dreaming is due to the same causes, and they physiological in the baser sense, should be discarded: it is no more true, at any rate, than that all thinking can be traced to physiological excitements and disturbances. It would help the debate to a reasonable conclusion were we to go further, giving up the assumption that sleep is and must be an inferior condition for mind to work in. There is no *a priori* justification for thinking so—no difficulty in accepting the conceit that while the people of some neighbouring planet spend their waking hours without a thought beyond the conduct of life and its enjoyments, their minds fill in sleep with all the best of their musing, planning, inventing, moralising. It will certainly be convenient to suspend the conclusion that dreams are always occasioned by sensibilities in a condition of disorder. Some are, no

doubt, and by far the most; but others, as we have shown abundantly though by few examples, can only be explained by a state of mind so different as to be the opposite of disorder. There may have been disorder to begin with, and probably was; but then there was *re*-order, upon a different scheme and use of the various qualities of mind.

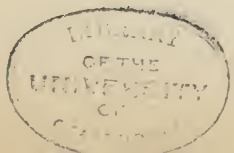
M. Maury, who has treated of this subject with great care experimentally and at considerable length, believes entirely in mental disorder as the explanation of dreams; and yet his observations compel him to say in one place, 'Mais ce qui est plus étrange, c'est que l'intelligence peut accomplir de prime abord, sans l'intervention de la volonté, un acte qui dénote le concours de toutes les autres facultés.' No doubt; and since that power is so often and so strongly manifested, it becomes a wonder which is neither unmiracled nor chased away by the verdict 'Mind in a condition of disorder.' Why disorder, considering how much is accomplished by the concurrence of our other faculties, when we are *awake*, without the conscious exertion or even the conscious supervision of

the will? M. Maury should have reflected (for the reflection carries far) that many of the tasks we set ourselves are begun, not by a determination of will to begin them, but by the stir and solicitation of the faculties necessary to their accomplishment.

As for his experimenting in the production of dreams, the most remarkable thing about it is the fallacy it is grounded on. Sleeping men have been made to dream 'to order.' They have been made to dream according to the experimentalist's intention by whispering 'Fire' into their ears, or by exposing their naked feet to a current of cold air, or by drumming on a window-pane, or in other ways selected for the purpose; and this being accomplished it is said that dreaming can have little claim to serious consideration. But if dreaming is to be scouted on that ground, thinking should go with it. For while there is little difficulty in making a sleeping man dream of a certain order of things, this or that, there is still less difficulty in directing his thoughts into any channel you choose to send them into when he is awake; nor need you employ

any different means. Without his previous knowledge and consent, turn a cold draught of air upon the back of his neck from a window-sash; address a few words to him in the voice of Punchinello; murmur the name of his wife in a drowsy interval of silence; nay, do but ask of him the present price of coal, and be sure that in a moment his mind will be filled with thoughts and images of your own ordaining.

And it is plain that dreams would not cease to be a worthy object of study though the usual explanation of their origin (when it is not said to be indigestion) were ascertained to be correct. No sooner does it appear that a dream was occasioned by the firing of a gun, a shouting in the street, or some other external provocation, than all interest in it is allowed to drop. However remarkable the vision may be in itself, show that it started from the slamming of a door, and the first feeling of mystery is immediately dispelled, a laugh is raised as if at the detection of some ridiculous imposture, and the dream is thought of no more. But it may deserve a great deal of attention however



started. The firing of a gun is naturally suggestive of numberless dramatic scenes; but it does not account for the prodigious rapidity with which a long succession of images will pass before the mind in the dream that ensues upon the sound. There is nothing in such noises to explain how it is that when we are awake, and with all our wits in order and alert, the mind would be a hundred times longer in reviewing the scenes of a dream or taking in its details. Neither can such noises account for the fact that the drama of dreams is presented to the mind's eye with a vividness far beyond all that our waking imagination can achieve when put to the utmost strain. It is not from them that we draw a power of invention which it would puzzle us to equal with our eyes open; nor because dreams may be started by the ringing of a bell or the patter of rain on a window are we forbidden to speculate on the prodigious activities and potentialities of imagination which those phenomena seem to disclose.

As to the confusion in dreams, the rapid inconsequence of them, the swift transitions,

the sudden changings and mergings of scene and circumstance which so often make them seem merely ridiculous, two things have to be considered. Since the whole transaction of a dream proceeds at so great a pace, it is not remarkable that the transitions should appear monstrously abrupt to our waking senses. But especially it should be remembered that few of us note at the end of the day how many hours of it have been spent in a loose medley of imaginings as excursive as those that occupy our minds in sleep, and like them in this very particular of breaking off in abrupt and incongruous transitions :—like them, too, in being soon forgotten. Here again, however, the greater activity, force, and impressiveness of imagination in sleep becomes apparent. For the day-dreams in which, unnoticed by ourselves, so many hours of our waking life are spent, are not only paler than those others while they last, but are hardly ever remembered for five minutes. None are remembered as vividly as many a dream of the night, though such dreams have become proverbs of passing things; and — unless they are

something more than day-dreams—never do they influence thought, feeling, conduct in any degree ; which is not true of dreams of the night.

NOTES

PROLEPTIC DREAMS

In the preceding pages some examples of the proleptic dream are given. Another of equal significance, though not perhaps so amusing in detail, was supplied to me from the note-book of a distinguished architect. He says :—

'Early in 1886, when the excitement about Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule Bill was at its height, I dreamt that I was surveying one of the royal palaces, and had to pass up one of the staircases. On the half-landing I came upon the Queen in conversation with a lady whom I knew intuitively to be a Miss Cowper. I did not know, nor did I ever know, of such a person in real life. I caught the drift of the conversation. Miss Cowper was endeavouring to persuade the Queen to withhold the royal assent from Mr. Gladstone's Bill when it came before her. At this point I offered to withdraw, but was asked to remain by the Queen, who said that what she had to say might be heard

by any one of her subjects. The conversation continued at great length, Miss Cowper seeming to urge every argument at her command, the Queen declaring that she would not depart from constitutional usage.

'During the entire conversation I was annoyed by a loud ticking noise, which I could not account for.

'The scene of the dream changed, and the time. It was the morning following the conversation that I was in the smoking-room of a certain club. There I saw a well-known publisher, who asked me whether I had seen the *Times* of that day. It contained, he said, an account of a very interesting conversation between the Queen and Miss Cowper; "and," he added, "your name is mentioned in connection with it." I got the paper, and saw the conversation printed at length. It occupied several columns, and I marked the introduction of my own appearance, and the Queen's desire that I should remain. At this point it flashed across me that the ticking noise which I had heard was accounted for. I said to myself, "All the time the conversation was going on it was being telegraphed to the *Times* office."'

Here again the mind constructs a dramatic scene, some integral parts of which it conceals from itself as an intended surprise for itself at the conclusion of the tale. A mental operation far out of the range of possibility in our waking hours, but accomplished in dreams.

TIME AND SPACE IN DREAMS

A tutor, worn out with work by day and watching by night, was examining a pupil one day from a question-and-answer book. The business had not got very far when, immediately after reading out a question, the tired man closed his eyes. Seizing the occasion, weariness betrayed him instantly; he slept and dreamed. It was a long, long dream, carrying him through many scenes and events. Hours of dreaming it seemed; and yet he woke in time enough to hear the last words of the answer to his question. Fifteen seconds, perhaps, for the whole episode: the falling to sleep, the beginning of the dream, the development of its changing times, scenes, and conversation, their cessation, and the return to conscious wakefulness.

This is the most remarkable illustration of dream rapidity (it was given to me by the dreamer himself) that has ever come to my knowledge; though many others equally convincing have been recorded. Indeed, no characteristic of dreaming is so well ascertained as this, which is one of its greatest marvels. And yet the general disposition is to regard it less as a wonder than an absurdity. That a man should dream of embarking in a ship, of sailing out into a storm, and of passing through all the horrors of shipwreck between one gust of wind and another, is

much oftener told to illustrate the oddity of dreaming than the amazing facility of our mental qualities when they are not exerted. 'As quick as thought,' it is said. But here there is a power much quicker than thought. By thoughts we do not always mean reasonings and conclusions. We also mean conceptions, ideas, which, as they flash into the mind, are often accompanied by or are themselves mental pictures. But in dreams the ideas, the conceptions, or even reasonings and conclusions, like those embodied in the dream-fable of the watch, are cast into regular dramatic form. They are acted out in a succession of scenes. But the drama which would take hours to present on any stage but this of the human mind, passes with its multitude of particulars in a few moments. With all its array of speeches, scenes, events, and with all the long succession of observations and emotions it gives rise to, it begins and ends in how long a time? The question is answered by the tutor's experience.

On any theory of dreams this is a wonder no less worthy of consideration than such matters as the atmosphere of Mars; on the theory that dreams are the product of imagination working without the guidance of the reasoning and critical powers, it is a wonder that may be particularly informing as to imagination itself. For on this theory it seems that the first of faculties, freed from control in sleep, finds its own way of doing as much as the mind can do in its harmonious

entirety. Moreover, it plays the part of all in one with such a prodigiously rapid use of splendid but apparently tedious means that the mind in its harmonious entirety cannot even understand how it is done.

In most fields of investigation the discovery of a power like this would suggest that other amazing displays of power may not be quite illusory; and I do not know why philosophy should reject the suggestion here.

DREAMS OF REVELATION

A lady whose name is honourably known to the world sent me the following story a little while since:—

'Until I was more than sixteen years old I had never lived at home. I was always away at English or foreign schools; and when I did come home for vacation it was to join my family at a house by the sea. Therefore a great town business-house belonging to my father was perfectly strange to me when I went home to it a little while before his death. After his death the business fell into the hands of my mother, who knew nothing of such affairs, and was robbed shamefully by her servants. We girls were never allowed to know anything of business matters; and though it is possible that I heard these robberies complained of, I gave little heed to them.

'One night when all the family had gone to

bed I stayed up reading *Don Quixote*. I read by the light of a single candle in a large drawing-room. Even now, looking back, I cannot be convinced that I fell asleep, or decide that what was perhaps a dream was not a vision. On hearing a church-bell ring the first quarter past one I looked up from my book. Opposite was my dead father's favourite armchair. To my astonishment a black veil seemed to lie over it. While I rubbed my eyes and again stared, the veil lightened till it became gray; and in the ugly mist a shape became visible. With a slowness which still fills me with horror to remember, the shape took the lineaments of my father: not as I had seen him dead, but grayer, thinner, and with a dreadful clayey look about him. Taking up the candle, he told me to follow him and learn the secret of the robberies, which, he said, were greater than they were supposed to be; and at the same time he named as culprit a man-servant whom we all trusted and were attached to. As for me, I should as soon have suspected my mother as this man. I followed my father downstairs into parts of the house that were unfamiliar to me. He opened the doors without any difficulty, though the keys were upstairs in my mother's room.

'I can affirm that I never heard the word "sky-light" until my father pronounced it that night, as he showed me the thing of that name above a back door leading into a dark, unfrequented street. This he told me had been in

his day carefully locked every night. Since then, it seemed, nobody had ever thought of fastening it; and by means of my dream it was soon proved that thieves who were the accomplices of our trusted servant used to come in and go out through this skylight.'

THE STUDY OF DREAMS

THE STUDY OF DREAMS

I

No process or transaction of mind has engaged so much attention for so many centuries as our dreaming when we sleep. Long before there was any thinking about thought — which we may fairly suppose seemed no more strange to thousands of generations than the power to walk, and was no more inquired into—there was thinking about dreams. In what order the various faculties of mind developed there is no knowing for certain ; but this we know, that dogs have mind enough to dream, and it is reasonable to believe that the first use of speculation amongst human creatures was to infer the existence of gods and devils from the physical phenomena of Nature, and from dreams that there is an invisible world whence the spirits of the dead return. For races like our own

—for all, indeed—it is a far cry back to the times when thought began to brood upon these things, but it has never ceased to do so in the same way. Grave Interpreters of Dreams are no longer to be found in the retinue of courts where the highest wisdom is taught and science is best known, but to the mass of mankind, including some of the wisest, dreams still present themselves as belonging to the supernatural. No doubt they may be dismissed five minutes afterward as nothing of the kind—Reason stepping in to perform her function according to whatever ability she may be endowed with in each particular case. Or perhaps it is not the man's own reason that intervenes (there being not enough of it for the purpose), but only an echo of the reasoning of others. But however that may be, we are all aware of an inherent habit of mind, so strong that whenever an impressive, a mysterious, a seemingly meaningful dream occurs to us, Reason has to be called in at first or second hand to persuade us that there is nothing supernatural about it. And Reason does not always succeed. It says its say, and we

assent to what it says; for is it not Reason that speaks? But what it denies it doesn't destroy. Otherwise, there would be no need of calling upon it again when the next 'strange' dream occurs, and the next, and the next after that; which, though it be the hundredth of its kind, has only to be a little stranger than the rest and the old superstition revives in all its original force.

The truth seems to be that in this matter as in many others we go in perpetual masquerade. At a certain stage of advancement in civilisation it is with our minds as with our bodies. We discover an impropriety of appearance in both when naked; and for our own comfort quite as much as for the general convenience, we clothe the one as well as the other in commonly-approved garments. Twelve ladies and gentlemen at a dinner-table, a dozen voices sadly deploring something wrong in somebody's character or somebody's history, no voice sounding insincere either to its utterer or to any one else at the social board, and not a soul of the whole twelve capable of affirming to itself that it sees anything very wrong in the

conduct or the sentiment condemned. As they shake their heads and look solemnly down, none of the party are conscious for a moment that they are not their natural selves. They are their natural selves now, with their clothes *on*. It is when their clothes are off that they feel in an embarrassed uncomfortable way that they are not their natural selves, and hasten to cover themselves up accordingly.

And as it is with our unfinished morals, so it is with our inveterate superstitions. When they come upon the carpet we laugh at them, as by custom and in duty bound; but they themselves are incapable of shame and cannot be laughed away. There are men who, with more or less of hesitation, do avow belief in the supernatural character of dreams, and the number of such persons among the educated seems to be increasing rather than diminishing just now. But the general disposition is to take the cue from science and declare all belief of the kind to be ridiculous; yet here we might again begin the tale of twelve ladies and gentlemen at a dinner-table. The talk is of dreams. All that

seems remarkable in them is ascribed by common consent to mere coincidence, to latent memories, to unconscious colouring on the part of the dreamer, and the like; but all the while one half of the company at least is very sure, in secret, that none of these explanations apply to dreams of their own. There was more than that in *them*, and the something unascertained lay beyond all that modern Science and Philosophy acknowledge as the natural order of things. So persistent in the human mind are the superstitions which awoke in it with the first dawnings of conscious thought; and being perpetuated through ages and ages of mental development, of physical brain-growth, they have not improbably entered into the very mechanism of mind.

How rooted is the association of dreams with the supernatural may be seen by the discussion whenever they are taken up for serious debate. Till lately, the argument has been all on one side—the formal argument, that is to say; but this is a day of high psychological and spiritual inquiry: there are seekers for truth in every known superstition, and of

course for foundations of truth in the supernatural conception of dreams. And when we look to what is said on either side, we see that the main point with both is to put superstition on its trial. Both stick closely to the question, Do dreams tell of spiritual influences which science derides as illusory, or is science right and dreams a mere phantasmal product of corporal disturbance? That is the one point to which the dispute is addressed, with so much of an exclusive eagerness that inquiry rarely strays away from it. And yet either side may be right, within certain limits, while neglecting a more fruitful study of dreams than the one that each pursues.

What this may be will presently be mentioned. Meanwhile, let us glance at the controversy as usually conducted—so far, at least, as to see how far each set of disputants goes in asserting or denying the supernatural quality of dreams.[1]

To choose a name of authority, Dr.

[1] 'Supernatural,' as employed here and elsewhere, is not a very satisfactory word; but it is the best that presents itself for use, and its use is not likely to be mistaken.

Radcliffe—a distinguished physician of our own day, who was greatly given up to metaphysics and psychology—drew from dreams very large inferences indeed. They included 'liberty to believe' that our dead may return to us in visions of the night, as we call them, and even that the world we live in is peopled with the spirits of those who have no more to do with its daily affairs. What seems to have struck him most is the annihilation of time and space in dreams; a characteristic which supplies the disbeliever in their significance with much of his incredulity and some of his ridicule. But, as we may presently see, there is much more than matter of amusement in it without assenting to Dr. Radcliffe's (speculative) deductions. He observes that when we dream 'imagination at once sets at naught the notion which measures time in moments and space in footsteps, by continually passing from one moment to any other in time, or from one point to another in space, without the least feeling of having made any movement'; and he infers from this observation that we may be justified in thinking that our

true relations to time and space are not exactly those which we believe them to be when we are awake. 'How is it,' he asks, 'that I am at once introduced into a world of spirit in which there is, as it were, no time and space—in which I lose the distinction between now and then, between here and there? I do not explain the fact by saying that it is a mere fiction of my imagination. Imagination is a manifestation of my own being. Where imagination can be there *I* must be, in spirit at least. In a word, I do not see how to account for the operation of my imagination in time and space without supposing that I must be a *spirit* which is truly alive in the past and future as well as in the present, and which is in the true sense of the word ubiquitous. And so it may be that my true relations to time and space are made known to me more clearly in a dream than at any other time.'

At this point Dr. Radcliffe probably remembered that Imagination is precisely the faculty whose testimony is rejected at the bar of Reason. That he drew these notions of his from imagination is what they would

say who wished to prove him unsupplied with trustworthy evidence. Therefore he proceeds to the reasonable assertion that imagination is a creative faculty. Its phenomena 'are utterly unintelligible unless there be in men a spirit which participates in the nature of the Creator so far as to be not only superior to time and space but also truly poetic or creative.' And so (to come to Dr. Radcliffe's conclusion) 'from this point of view you may look upon yourself as a spirit which may be incarnated at one time and translated out of reach of the senses at another.' You are 'more or less at liberty to believe that the dead and living may exist together in a world of spirit in which the so-called living are less living than very many of the so-called dead; and that in fact the dead may come and go as they do in dreams.'

A world where the dead may come and go 'as they do in dreams'! It is said as if, whatever hesitations there may be in accepting the belief that we are in bonds to false conceptions of time and space, or however much we may doubt when we are awake

that the spirits of the dead are everywhere about us, it is an unimpeachable assumption that these spirits come and go in dreams.

Now this is the first of the two great superstitions about dreams; the other being that omens and warnings are conveyed to us by the same agency—intimations of events past, present, and to come, which could not be brought to knowledge otherwise. Dr. Radcliffe's other views need not be regarded here. He is only intended to stand for the few men of education and thought who boldly declare their willingness to accept these more ancient superstitions without any reserve of ifs and ans. But what of the rest of mankind, in a community like our own, for example? It may be said without doubt that hardly one amongst them could listen without a shock to the plain, direct, unencumbered assertion that the dead come to us in dreams. And yet by far the greater number either believe it true, or half-believe; or, when they are least credulous, are in the asking state of mind that 'wonders' whether such-and-such things are really true or not. For the shock that we have spoken of is not

a shock of incredulity or rejection; it is rather like that which most minds experience when some secret thought is surprised, or when some furtive emotion, concealed for its sacredness, is threatened with discovery. So much may be said for most people, taught or untaught, or whether they be of a religious turn or otherwise. And as for the remainder, the smaller number who are quick to deny that dreams have any more significance than a toothache, it would be interesting to know *how* quick the denial springs up in the breasts of most of them. For there is a promptitude of perfect conviction—or, as we might phrase it, conviction of primal insistence—which is aware of no impediment between the thought and the word; and there is a second-rate order of conviction, which does not declare itself till after some original doubt has been for the thousandth time swallowed down. Only for a moment, only as a shadow may the doubt reappear; but reappear it always does before conviction speaks, and has to be suppressed anew on every occasion. It is possible to be sure of holding certain opinions honestly, and yet

to be aware from time to time that every square inch of those opinions rests on underlying doubt. Such opinions are like the floating islands that we sometimes read of; and many of the kind would be confessed to by sceptics of every variety were they interrogated in a Palace of Truth.

We shall see presently, perhaps, that some of these islands, substantial as they seem, are composed of most dissoluble matter. As the question now stands between those who hold by the supernatural in dreams and those who affirm that dreams are the merest fumes of fantasy, it is agreed that the latter have all the advantage of argument. Had Dr. Radcliffe the genius of Plato and twice his own learning, nothing would be proved by his statement that the dead visit us in dreams except that he thought they do; just as he thought, judging from the same phenomena, that the soul and spirit of man may be ubiquitous 'in the true sense of the word.' Probably he went upon experience of such visits—experience of such a character that he could hardly doubt them actual and supernatural. He certainly took into account

the stories we all read and hear, in which veracious persons testify to such visits at the moment of death, or to warn of some impending danger, or to convey some revelation. But none of these tales bear the strain of proof that science must needs apply to them. The evidence is single; corroboration is wanting; fortuity may come in; coincidence is probable, as also the unconscious suppressions, exaggerations, importations of an excited fancy. For a matter of antecedent likelihood such evidence would be enough; but not for unveilings of the future or the apparition of departed spirits to a man asleep.

To these objections there is no answer; and to repeat what was said in the previous essay, two things greatly assist in imposing silence on believers who remain unmoved in their belief. The first is a dread of being thought credulous, superstitious, and therefore weak-minded: a fear which is very effective at all times, and the more so in an age when a perfectly philosophical spirit of agnosticism in a few has cast the general ignorance and shallowness into swaggering

forms of incredulity for everything but the omnipotence of physical science. The other thing is that it is often quite impossible to defend belief in the supernatural character of dreams without entering upon a particular account of events, relationships, affections, and emotions of the most intimate and sacred kind. The stories that are told on behalf of the supernatural in dreams are not one in ten of what could be told but for the pain of telling them, and the repugnance to unveiling before public view, with name, date, and circumstance, what belongs to our most precious and pathetic remembrances.

It appears, then, that for some reason or another, most of the evidence on the one side never comes before the judges; and that what is withheld is probably the most striking. But that it would be convincing if adduced is another matter. The argument from coincidence, illusion, undesigned exaggeration or suppression is very strong; and the difficulty of offering such material corroboration as would satisfy a court of law (and it is reasonable to ask for as much) has never been overcome.

But the scientific genius of the age has more to say to the dreamer of strange dreams than 'Prove your particulars: when you have done so we will begin to think that there may be something wonderful about them.' The visionaries (by which I mean no opprobrium) are confronted by a positive as well as a negative account of dreams. Science undertakes to say not only what they are not, but what they are; and if this explanation be right there is an end of the matter: the case is decided. And it has been a long time before the world, this explanation; and all the while it has had the applause of the whole army of common-sense persons who either are or affect to be both amused and convinced by it. I say 'affect,' because nobody can doubt that there is a great deal of private reserve in the acceptance of the functional-morbidity account of dreams; and I can but think that some who preach it have their secret dubieties, and would acknowledge them but for the fear of seeming to bring superstition into science. As for the amusement which is so commonly derived from the discovery that

dreaming is entirely due to a morbid condition of organic function, it is probably explained by a sensation of relief from tiresome speculation, often of a boding character; or perhaps there is something really comical in the thought that our most pregnant and prophetic dreaming is only an expression of uneasiness in the stomach.

It can be shown, however, that the physiological explanation of dreams is almost if not entirely worthless; so far does it fall short of its pretensions. At the best it is no more explanatory of what it is supposed to expound than the following account of the writing of a book would be:—'A man takes into his hand an instrument called a pen; he dips one end of it into a fluid (usually black) called ink; and with the ink at the end of the pen he makes a variety of marks on white or blue-tinted paper. And there is no more to be said about the writing of a book: the explanation is simple and complete.'

That this is no travesty will be seen when any of the popular-science essays on dreams is examined. They all teach the same thing

from the same imperfect grounds, so that to quote Dr. Benjamin Richardson, himself a great expounder of the laws of Nature, is to cite the common verdict of scientific inquiry. 'Dreams,' said this gentleman in a recently published lecture—'Dreams are all explainable on physical grounds; there is no mystery about them save that which springs from blindness to natural facts and laws.' With that he proceeds to repeat the well-known formulæ for dispelling the groundless sense of mystery which still harbours in the human mind. 'The seat of dreaming,' it should be understood, 'is in the locked-up closet of mental impressions, the brain and the spinal column, commonly called the cerebro-spinal centre.' It is there that our dreams take shape; but to know what they are it is necessary to remember that 'we have two nervous systems —one our own, by which we will and do, the other Nature's, which goes on with our vital work whether we will or no.' This second nervous system, which serves to keep our various organs going automatically, 'is centred within the trunk of the body; not

in the closed box of the skull and spinal column, but in the line of the great viscera, to which its nerves are distributed and in which it communicates with the nerves of the cerebral system which are our own,' or under our governance. More particularly, 'the involuntary nerves' in the larynx, œsophagus, heart, stomach, convey intelligence to the brain of any local disturbance. That being understood, we are at once on the track of the true explanation of dreams. They ensue upon certain perturbations in the brain which are not the consequence of action by its own nerve-system (as when we sit down to make a calculation or plan a novel), but are communicated from the other nervous system, in token of local disturbance or distress. (These communications from the unthinking to the thinking part of us may be compared, perhaps, to the ringing of an electric bell in an upper chamber of the house when the wires are disturbed below; as by burglarious entry.) When these brain perturbations are set up in sleep, we dream; or rather that is a frequent consequence. Sometimes they are produced by vibrations

started from outside the body and striking on the senses; at other times they proceed from within the body—that is to say, from the second nerve-system which runs in the line of the great viscera, and is specially active in the organs of digestion. In either case they point to the conclusion that dreams may be 'nothing more than the common vibrations of terrestrial media acting upon a corporeal vibratorium.' Now they arise from the firing of a gun, the ringing of a bell, a breath of cold air upon a naked foot, or some other disturbance from without; and now 'perturbation in the richly-nerved digestive organs send vibrating and startling messages from within to the mental centres,' and then we have another sort of dream. And thus the whole thing is explained. Dreams are 'a purely physical phase of life.' They are 'all explainable on physical grounds,' and there is no mystery about them to any one who has a fair portion of the knowledge that may be gained in a dissecting-room.

That this account of the matter has something explanatory in it is obvious; but it is

so little as to be of no importance. In like manner, and to about the same degree, the alphabet is an explanation of Shakespeare's plays. And so if one were to examine the mystery of prophecy, he might conceivably think it advisable to start with a description of the vocal organs and the physiological processes under which they vibrate. But the lecturer who, proceeding to that extent, broke off with a declaration that he had finished with a subject that required no further elucidation would find no one willing to allow that he had begun upon it. And it does not appear that the expositors of whom Dr. Richardson is an example are any more conclusive in what they say of dreams.

No doubt the explanation they offer would be cogent and complete if the conceptions they undertake to dispel were what they are not. The physiological argument would apply effectually to a belief that dreams are of exterior origin altogether; that they come to us from without; that our brain-system, whatever its scope or its limitations, has nothing to do with the breeding of

them. If that were the common idea, Dr. Richardson's argument could boast of a comprehensive and finished purpose; but except, perhaps, in the witless mind of one in five thousand there is no such idea to refute. Every intelligent man is aware that his dreams are his own, just as his thoughts are his own. Physiological instruction on that point is unnecessary; it is not included in what is asked for; and to show how the machinery of mind is set in motion is not to unveil the mystery of what the mind produces when it is at work. To pretend anything to the contrary is almost as if an engineer should say, 'Here is a steam-yacht, well supplied with canvas. Launched upon the seas, you may view from beneath its sails many strange and beautiful and terrible sights; some, perhaps, that have never been seen before. But after I explain to you the interior mechanism of the vessel, and show how one part of it works with or upon another to get the ship in motion from the dock, you must not pretend that there is anything incomprehensible or unexpected in what you see on your travels.'

But, indeed, the very terms of the physiological exposition inform us that where it leaves off the dream it affects to explain is about to begin. Vibrations of terrestrial media, whether they proceed from a cry in the street or from an uneasy stomach, are not dreams, any more than the breath blown into a clarionet is a tune. Granting that the origin of every dream is vibration in the corporeal system (which in every conceivable case must attend the beginning of a dream), the dream itself is—what? We know by experience that it may be many things—taking a prodigious range of variety from the ridiculous to the sublime, the extreme of triviality to the deepest meaning. But whatever else they may be, and excluding all possible illusions as to spiritual communication, spiritual illumination, and everything else that imports concession to superstitious belief, dreams are operations of the mind. Whatever mystery they may offer for inquiry is presented by mind in operation, not by the physical movements that set mind at work; and therefore the pretensions of 'scientists' to 'leave no mystery about

them' after once expounding the mechanism by which they are started are quite untenable. The physiological explanation of dreams which imposes on so many people for a humorous but complete account of them leaves off before it explains anything to the purpose.

The secret of this remarkable inconclusiveness seems to be an inveterate reluctance to allow that dreams *are* operations of the mind. The endeavour is to show, the effect of the endeavour is to persuade us, that they are little more than physical motions in the brain, like whatever excites them. Dr. Richardson, indeed (and he is only quoted as a popular exponent of the prevailing doctrine)—Dr. Richardson says distinctly that dreams are 'a purely physical phase of life.' By that, apparently, he intends to deny them all relationship with mind; for no one calls that 'purely physical' which he takes to be mental, or mental though with a physical cause. But it is evident that he does not mean 'purely physical,' however he may be understood; for not only does he say elsewhere that 'the seat of dreams is in

the locked-up closet of mental impressions' (the brain, in short), but he also speaks of dreaming as 'a partial mental activity, combined with more or less complete physical repose.' In this, however, there is no additional teaching. It does not in the least degree explain or even approach the mysteries which are said to be entirely dissipated.

If, indeed, the physiologist could show that the nerve-system to which he points is employed in the production of dreams *alone*, his contentment with it as a full explanation of sleep-phenomena would be a little more intelligible. But their origin is not in any special and perhaps rudimentary system of nerve-communication. They are set in motion by the common mechanism of mind; which, be it observed, operates to the production or the incitement of what we call Thought exactly as it does to the bulk of what we call Dreaming. For the one and the other there is no difference in the starting machinery, and no several ways of starting.

This fact and its significance may be

illustrated in a very few words. We all agree that when the vibratory sounds of a bell pierce through the mufflings of sleep, and act upon the vibratorium in our skulls, but yet not so as to wake us, mind begins to dream. But what happens when the noise is loud enough to wake us quite? Why, then, and as a consequence of the same vibratory action in the vibratorium, we begin to think. The thought may be so trivial that it does not abide with us in any sense or to any purpose, even for a moment; and the dream may be so unimpressive that it passes just as quickly away. But whether they are of that common character, or whether the dream is full of meaning and the thought an inspiration (we are used to calling thoughts 'inspired'), they both take shape by operation of the mind, and were started by the same agency in the same manner. So as to the consequence of one kind of vibratory action—that which strikes from without. As to the other, do the nerves of a distressed stomach never transmit messages of woe to the casket of our minds when we are awake? And is there any difference

in the general effect of those messages on the mind when we sleep and when we wake? If the dreams of dyspeptics are melancholic, burdened with a vague mysterious feeling of doubt, regret, despair (as Dr. Richardson says they are), do they differ from the dyspeptic's waking thoughts? That they do not is the misery of civilised mankind, or the better half of it.

These facts are very obvious, and, considered alone, they should teach any one who undertakes to dispel the mystery of dreams that it will not do to stop at their starting-point. The lesson which the facts afford comes to this: When, after going through his physiological exposition, the man of science says, 'I have shown you that there is no mystery in dreams,' he also says in effect, 'If there was any mystery in the constitution and operation of the human mind, I have exploded it. Speculation ends when you are acquainted with the fact that the brain is a vibratorium, and learn that as long as certain terrestrial media act upon it you think, you reason, you bring your imagination into play, and find yourself possessed

of something called will and something else called judgment. You are now fully informed about all these faculties, their working and their products. If they ever seemed to you mysterious enough to excite wonder and to deserve investigation, you now understand that there is no mystery about them at all.'

So exemplified, the fallacy embedded in purely physiological explanations of dreaming appears prodigious. But it is no less great than it seems; and that it should be missed by trained inquirers is as much a matter of wonder as anything in the whole subject. Every physiologist who, to the best of his ability, marks out the seat of mind and traces the various communications of the senses with this cerebro-spinal centre, knows at every moment that when he has completed his exposition he will have thrown no light on the mental faculties themselves, nor have followed them by a single step into the fields they work in. And dreams being, like thought, the product of some or all of the mental faculties in operation, their expositor should be as thoroughly aware that he will

leave undone all that he pretends to do if he cannot get beyond a statement of how and where they make their beginnings. It can be said in twenty words that dreams come into existence through the same system of causation that promotes other mental operations; but, that being said, what dreams are and what they signify is left as much in the dark as before.

As to what they signify, however, the intimation of the popular scientist is plain enough: they signify nothing. As to what they are, it would really seem as if the morbidity theory carried its professors to the belief that dreaming is so little of a mind-manifestation as to be unworthy of serious inquiry. That is certainly the conclusion that is impressed upon their readers, who are exhorted to look upon dreaming as a sort of physiological curiosity, like the scratching of a decapitated frog when you tickle his sides with a straw. Therefore a word or two more on that point may not be in excess.

It is true, no doubt, that many dreams do immediately arise from a morbid condition

of organic function; and it is equally true that all the rest are set in motion by disturbance of one sort or another in the organic seat of mind. But, as we have seen, it is not true that their genesis or suggestion differs in either case from that of the most ordered, most philosophic or poetic thought; which, however, does not mean that every one who dreams is a philosopher or a poet, any more than is every one who thinks. Taking the case of distinct morbidity—as I suppose persistent disorder of the 'richly-nerved digestive organs' would be called—we find that it affects the mind when we are awake or asleep in exactly the same way; and therefore to write as if the sleep-conditions were peculiar is merely to mislead. Dyspepsia does not affect us in the dreaming state alone with fantasies of fear and anxiety. Bad dreams o' nights are no peculiar product of the morbidness. When we are awake dyspepsia whelms our faculties in what is vulgarly called the 'blues,' a short word for a state of mind crowded with vague phantasmal fears, in which (as Dr. Richardson says is our case when dreaming indigestion-

dreams) we feel as if 'some terrible blackness or thunder-cloud overshadowed life.' Obviously there is no reason for insisting on the morbid origin of one set of mental phenomena more than the other: in short, we may reject the word 'morbid' as peculiarly applicable to dreams in sleep.

Yet the physiological expositor of dreams may step in at this point to say: 'But though the mind is similarly affected, sleeping or waking, by perturbation in the digestive organs, there is a great difference between the resultant action of the mind in one case and in the other. The gloom of the waking dyspeptic and the wild and monstrous phantasms that people his brain in sleep are not the same things.' It must be admitted that they are not—exactly. There are differences as well as likenesses between them; but both likenesses and differences suggest, not that dreams are without significance and capable of teaching nothing, but the contrary; and that is the one great point for consideration. Viewed together, the differences and the likenesses forcibly present the question which no mere physiological

demonstration is able to touch ; the question, namely, whether dreams do not reveal our mental faculties as capable of far greater freedom, activity, and expansion than we are conscious of in the waking state, and whether a right study of them may not enlarge our comprehension of the potentialities of mind.

For it appears that whereas the mental faculties of the dyspeptic in his waking state labour with vague and formless miseries, fears that take no shape, horrors in nebulosity, in sleep they respond to the disturbing cause with far more activity and intelligence, weaving dramas out of the vague and painting 'the terrible blackness and the thunder-cloud' with picture-parable. What does this prove, except that the mind, being under the same excitements or the same oppressions from the same cause both asleep and awake, answers to them in the one case with a vigour of comprehension and invention which it is absolutely incapable of in the other? To his own consciousness the gloom of the dyspeptic's waking hours is a dream-state ; only (to his own consciousness

acknowledged or unacknowledged) duller, foggier, stupider, more sleepy, groping, and mentally inept.

And so it is if we turn to another sort of disturbance and another kind of dreams; such as are suggested by cold or hunger. The hungry man awake has his mind filled with emotions which, because he happens to be awake, are called 'thoughts': thoughts of good things to eat. But if we are to distinguish between thoughts and dreams, these are not thoughts. In truth (and the unconsidered fact illustrates the whole subject) the habitual occupation of the mind at all times is not thinking but dreaming. The greater part of its employment, its normal and only spontaneous employment, is dreaming; that is to say, a dreaming which is no different by day and by night except in limitation and restraint. The hungry man, then—trudging across some dreary moor twelve hours after breakfast-time, or lying supperless in the street after no breakfast—finds his mind haunted with rambling thoughts of goodly food and noble flagons: tables brightly spread in warmth and light. The

vision changes from this to that, from one favourite dish to another favourite dish ; and that is all that the healthy mind is capable of under the circumstances. But with no greater provocation from a craving digestive apparatus, the same mind delivers itself in sleep of banqueting-scenes far more dramatic, incomparably more vivid, infinitely more pointed and particular than it ever invented in the waking day. That is the true mark for observation ; and should the hunger-and-thirst dream be attended by extravagance—which, however, is not always the case—all that can be said is that here is another point for inquiry. For there is no reason to suspect a more essential morbidity in these extravagances than in the roving fancies of the famishing man awake. They are the same in character precisely. The only difference is a difference of intensity, of dramatic invention and force. The fancies of the hungry man awake are not without some extravagance ; and if there is more of that quality in them when they take the shape of dreams in sleep the excess is not necessarily nor even probably

due to the invasion of morbid conditions. It speaks of—what? What but imagination in enlargement, and of a wild power in imagination which the waking faculties in co-ordination may wholesomely subdue but yet cannot excite, and would, indeed, be unaware of but for its revelation in dreams?

Since that must be the conclusion, it appears that dreams are as likely to repay serious thought as any other subject of psychological study. Certainly it becomes obvious that in giving so much importance to morbid conditions of organic function as explanatory of dreams, the physiologist blunts inquiry in too much contempt, and either exaggerates or is quite mistaken. The truth seems to be that physical pain and disturbance provoke the mind to much the same emotions (according to the character of the disturbance and the pain) by day and night; that there is no more morbidity of action in the one case than in the other; that in dreams these motions pass into a vigour of invention and a vividness of presentation which the waking mind is quite unequal to; and lastly, that what extravagance

there is in dreams of this variety may be regarded as only corresponding to the immensely superior freedom and activity of imagination in sleep.

But all disturbance of organic function is not morbid, and all dreams are not induced by physical distress. Some disturbance of organic function necessarily precedes the most natural waking from the most healthy sleep; that is to say, it precedes the resumption of conscious thought, with its orderly development of idea, memory, reason, fancy. Certain agitations occur in the cerebro-spinal centre, and we tranquilly pass from a condition of complete mental rest into a state of full mental activity. The internal physical movements that wake us to think are not only perfectly healthy but a necessary condition of health; and there is no reason to doubt that motions similarly suave and natural wake us to dream. Indeed, there is no reason to doubt that they are the same motions. The only difference is, that whereas the process is complete in the one case it is incomplete in the other; according to the common observation that hours of dreaming

may come into the half-dozen seconds between sleeping and waking. There is no disorder here — no disqualification of the dream of one moment, any more than the thought of the next, on the ground of morbid organic function.

II

WITHOUT going farther, then, it is obvious that although dreams are as much evidence of mind as anything else that can be named, profitable study of them is at its beginnings. Much has been written about them, no doubt; but always, since the age of Science dawned, in a straitened timid spirit. It is a shy subject, and it is so, very much, for a reason which Science is usually the first to take account of: the tyranny of words. 'Dreams' has become the most expressive synonym of vain and unsubstantial things; and when we say 'dreamer' we conjure up ideas of time squandered in dozing fatuity and intellect smouldering out in vapour. To treat of dreams as a matter of serious consideration

is to hazard the suspicion of being a dreamer oneself—weak, unscientific, superstitious; and hence it is, probably, that when men who are sufficiently impressed with the subject deal with the phenomena of dreams, they seem nervously anxious to preclude the supposition that they are capable of finding in them anything which the commonest facts will not explain. No speculation is tolerable to the scientific mind—or at any rate none is thought safe to introduce before the public—which can be charged with 'bordering on credulity.'

And yet it ought to be well understood that if credulity stifles the mind, scepticism is a kind of cramp; nor can there be much doubt that it is so felt by many who boast of it as a high sort of freedom. It would certainly seem that an age of credulity must needs be an inferior one, or such ages, of which there have been many, would be less despised by historians. And that we are all in fundamental agreement with the historians is proved at once when we ask ourselves whether we should have preferred to live in a credulous age. None of us would have

preferred to live in a credulous age ; and yet it is well for humanity that there have been such times, and that they lasted long. But for them we of these times would have been so very different, and so very much the worse off in our morals, our intellects, our pleasures and possessions, that one might almost question whether it is true that no good can come out of error. For of course a vast deal of the credulity of the credulous ages was sheer error. All that went to the belief in fairies, wood-sprites, water-nymphs, spirits of the air, was sheer error. Yet we of to-day should be sadly impoverished without it—and not only in the lingering pleasure it gives to us in youth, in the exercise of fancy it affords us then, and in the literary value of fairy lore to thousands of scholars. There is more than that in the matter. It is certain that there would be much less to say for the human mind as it is but for the fanciful credulous error that sprang up in it from times beyond knowledge. From that source poetry and art and the poet's and the artist's faculties have been nourished to an immeasurable extent. It was not in an age

of scepticism that Saracenic art took root, under that much-better-than-nothing in religion and morality, the Mahommedan creed. In Christendom itself when did art of every kind flourish most luxuriantly and spontaneously? The commonplace reply is, in those ages of faith which are also described as ages of credulity. The credulities of alchemy were ridiculous, but far from fruitless. The tremendous adventure of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was not carried out by men of a sceptical turn, and could never have been undertaken by any such persons. These instances and suggestions might be multiplied to the filling of a dozen pages. But more to the purpose is one remark in which there is very little hazard. An age of credulity may be described as an age of open-mindedness to the reception of the strange and unproved; and since that means the action and reaction of the unknown upon imagination, the imagination on the unknown, it is as likely to enlighten ignorance in due course as the sceptical mood.

For all this, it will be understood that to praise credulity is not my meaning, but only

to draw out a truth of which many need reminding: namely, that even from the point of view of the practical man there is such a thing as wholesome credulity as well as a wholesome scepticism. Either may operate to damp inquiry in the highest fields of human interest. If the one may be carried to excess so may the other, and even to worse results. A very good argument could be made out to show that excessive scepticism in the domain of speculation is more untoward than excessive credulity. Readiness to believe, willingness to run forward to the unbelievable—there can be no greatness of mind without it; neither can there be much discovery of any sort, even amongst the practitioners of the most plodding and mechanic science. Moreover, this may be said, and it ought to have great weight with all who are concerned for the broad and general elevation of the human mind: While there is no such thing as a pride of credulity, there is a pride of scepticism which is not only offensive to every intellectual sympathy, but has the disastrous effect of furnishing common minds

with a blighting and oppressive intellectual conceit. Amongst minds that are not the commonest, minds blessed with some cleverness though cursed with disproportionate activity and self-consciousness, it is capable of spreading with epidemic force; and then we have a body of sentiment or so-called opinion which sits in mocking repression on much that is more worthy than itself.

Men like Dr. Radcliffe might call this the true Satanic spirit without being far wrong, and they have only to descend from their high religious speculations to more worldly concerns to show that its influence on them deserves the same description. The silence it imposes, the repression it exerts, the cowardice it inspires, are bad for the whole character of the time it reigns in; as it does in our own. The courage that a man must call up before he raises from the phenomena of dreams such theories and persuasions as are quoted at the beginning of this essay almost amounts to foolhardiness. But even a much lower degree of courage cannot always be commanded for the discussion of a subject like dreams, so paralysing is the

fear of being suspected of superstitious tendencies, and so inveterate the presumption that whosoever would go beyond morbidity-theories and the like intends nothing less than an excursion out of common-sense into the wilds of supernaturalism.

It is more than probable that this presumption would be neither so active nor so severe but for the consciousness of nearly every mind that it has its own secret weakness on the subject; that its own experience carries it, not infrequently, far beyond the range of the physiologist's teaching; and that whenever this happens, after some strange vision of the night, it immediately finds itself wandering and wondering in the realm of mystic speculation. One step and it is over the border, and as much at home there as amidst the commonest details of the most matter-of-fact business. And it is also true that when dreams are taken up for philosophical speculation, as by the professors of psychical research, there is the same predisposition to connect them at once with the supernatural. They are immediately carried for inquiry into that field; as

if dreams could signify nothing unless they testified to the existence of supernatural influences or such as are generally so described. This is unfortunate. The more rational study of dreams is one against which no prejudice exists, although by secondary processes it may lead into the same field of supernaturalism; which, however, will lose that designation in the usual way as it is approached. By many a case we know that the supernatural of one age often turns out in another to be only the natural unascertained.

In brief, and again to insist on the moral of this discourse, the first inquiry into dreams should not be for intimations of a spiritual world and our own relations therewith, nor anything of the kind; they should be studied as rendering indications of mental processes, and above all of mental power. It is already clear enough that there is no reason why the play of mental faculty in dreams should be more unworthy of serious observation than the play and product of will-directed thought. Get rid of the associations of idleness, emptiness, extravagance, which surround the word they are known by, and it will

appear that the evidence yielded by dreams as to the constitution of mind, its various powers and their interaction and independence, is quite as valid as that which psychology draws from the poet's insight and the reasoning of philosophers. Even if dreams are of the nature of madness (which within certain limitations it may be contended that they are) this is none the less true. For madness itself, so far from lying beyond the scope of psychological study, is a very important part of it; and that for a reason which is much to our purpose. Madness, like dreaming, is not all alike. There are different kinds of madness, from that which we call inspired and that called raving to that which is idiotic. In some forms it is not shown in the decay but in the dis-order of the mental faculties. Dis-order, in the sense intended here, includes the meaning of decomplication: that is to say, a state of mind in which the mental qualities (or some of them) seem to fall apart, taking more independent action. Whatever the cause—which is neither here nor there—this is the observed effect in many cases; the advantage

it affords to study is a kind of 'dissecting out'; and one of the psychologist's greatest difficulties is doing that for himself by the customary process of excogitation. Dreams, then, should be equally studied, whatever their origin; for what they certainly seem to do is to decomplicate the mental faculties and present them to view in more independent action.

From this illustration it is obvious that dreams come naturally and helpfully into the study of mind, which is ourselves; a study, too, not only of ourselves as we are, but as we may possibly become. Some glimpses in that direction—speculative, of course, but interesting nevertheless—may reward the student who, putting the spiritualist and the materialist equally behind him, addresses himself to such questions as these: What are dreams? What faculties of the mind are mostly displayed in them? Which, if any, remain dormant? What is the probable cause, and what the observed consequence, of the activity of some faculties and the dormancy of others? Does any mental faculty take a change of character in dreams,

assume functions of which we are unconscious when awake, or exhibit powers and properties that only appear in sleep? In fine (omitting other questions contributory to the investigation as a whole), what do dreams teach us about the constitution of mind and its potentialities as a whole?

III

THE interest in dreams being common, and the pretension of this little book being only to convey gossiping hints and suggestions to the generality, of whom the author himself is one, there is no presumption, perhaps, in offering some advice in the business of thinking about these questions.

I.—As we have already said, it seems necessary in the first place to interrogate the assumption that dreams are to wise men all alike. We are probably wrong in putting them together in a single category ('only dreams')—nearly as wrong as it would be to do the same thing with thoughts. Considering whence they arise, and remembering the

saying, 'So many men, so many minds,' it is only reasonable to think that dreams may be of very different orders; not, may be, as different as wisdom and foolishness, but as the fancies of a fool and the inspirations of a poet. They may even differ altogether; as some that are rightly enough called morbid certainly seem to differ from others of the same kind. For besides the indigestion-dreams which figure so largely in popular dissertations on the subject, there is evidence of another sort, similar in origin but much more subtle and informing. These, too, arise from physical distress, but from physical distress otherwise undiscovered and perhaps undiscoverable. Doctors tell of dreams which embody intimations of physical disorder while it is yet so obscure and undeveloped as to be quite unknown to the dreamer in his waking state, and entirely unsuspected by everybody else. It is evident that dreams of that kind have a speciality which distinguishes them from those in which mental processes are carried on; as when, to quote an unimpeachable authority, 'a scholar engaged in a work of imagination, thinking

himself to sleep at the junction of cross-roads of thought, has often arisen in the morning well advanced on one of them, and inspired to write as fast as his pen would let him a passage or a poem.' Here we have examples of two distinct sorts of dreaming—the one reflective, the other constructive; and both are quite unlike the rambling inconsequential nonsense which dreaming often is—without, however, being more nonsensical than a good deal that runs on in the same minds in their waking hours.

And two lines of thought may be usefully followed from the first of these examples. The belief that dreams do sometimes reveal the existence of disease so obscure as to be unsuspected is new. It is almost as new as the discovery, to which it bears a certain resemblance, that a photographic plate exposed for a time to the sky will take the impress of stars beyond the range of human vision, with all its telescopic aids and appliances. Now whenever some latent malady is so revealed in sleep, it is not likely to be done in the language of a medical practitioner stating a case. That very rarely

happens in dreams. Never yet, perhaps, did the family doctor appear in a dream to say, 'My dear sir, the uneasiness that disturbs your slumber is a consequence of your taking into your system a too great quantity of a kind of food that is bad for you.' Still less likely is it, in the case of incipient disorder, that the dream-intimation should take the shape of the same physician bringing news of it: 'I am sorry to tell you that a tumour has struck root in you and will give you great trouble when we doctors find it out.' That is not the way with dreams. Parable is their means of expression. Fable mounted as a sort of stage-play in the mind is what meaning dreams always are. Then what more likely than that they should be mistaken for mere vapourish, haphazard phantasms? The fable is unrecognised, uninterpreted, and dismissed as the usual nonsense; all in ignorant contempt of a very serviceable function of mind. This consideration places us on one line of thought. The other leads straight to what has been suggested as the grand terminal point of the whole inquiry, and the one that

should be always kept in view. For every such dream is evidence that the mind is capable of exhibiting in sleep finer powers of detection, comprehension, interpretation, than it is conscious of in its waking state. It can receive and record in the one condition sensations of which it is unaware in the other.[1]

II.—It seems, then, that dreams are of different kinds, and should be studied in their varieties; when it may appear that if some are merely nonsensical others are informing. With this consideration another is associated—one that we have already touched upon. It is a mistake to draw any sharp distinction between the conditions of mind when it operates in sleep and when it wanders in dreaminess while we are awake. The common or perhaps the universal assumption is that these conditions are quite unlike; whereas it may be questioned whether they are not identical.

Day-dreams are well-known and acknow-

[1] For some further remarks on dreams that dramatise the existence of obscure or incipient functional distress, see note at the end of this essay.

ledged as a frequent occupation of the mind; but how largely the mind is employed in them does not seem to be recognised. The general conception of a day-dream is of something exceptional and imported; an occasional intrusion, an indulgence, a deliberate or permitted interruption of the ordinary course of mental activity. And no doubt day-dreams do take that character judged by our own consciousness; but this, perhaps, is only when we are strongly sensible of them—when they are inspired by some great hope or desire, and cannot be dismissed without a sense of pain which calls attention to them. But a great deal of the same kind of thing goes on without arousing consciousness. Indeed, most men who know themselves will assent, I think, to what has already been said on this point—namely, that the habitual occupation of the mind is not thinking, as we imagine, but dreaming.

Thought is the positive employment of the mental faculties, under direction and to some end or purpose; and it is the same thing when the purpose is a weighty one

and when it is vague and informal. In this respect thought corresponds to physical motion, to the muscles in movement; which are sometimes directed with strenuous determination on a set purpose, and sometimes (as when we ramble about the fields) move without conscious direction except at momentary intervals. But in both cases there *is* direction; in both of them the various sets of muscles which must be employed for the particular purpose in view are called upon to work in harmony for that purpose. The mental faculties being employed in like manner, we say that they are engaged in thought; but just as physical action is one thing in serving a gun on the battle-field and another in walking a Marine Parade, so with mental action. There is thought and thought. A great deal that is called by that name would hardly deserve it were desert in question; so lax is such thought in grasp, so loose of intention, so broken by lapses into what we must call dreaming: it cannot be described as anything else, in fact. The test of fatigue alone suffices to bring out the difference between

this kind of thought—which we habitually fall back upon as rest—and that of the merchant on mail-day or an architect puzzling out his plans. Yet for most of us there are many spaces in the waking day when the exertion (conscious or unconscious) which is necessary for the establishment of any condition of thought subsides altogether; or to put it another way, there are times when our mental faculties are under no more direction than the muscles of a man when he lies at ease on a grassy bank 'thinking of nothing at all.' At every such interval our minds are in a dream-state; and so far are we from suspecting anything abnormal in this state of mind that the feeling is one of return to a reposeful, fallow-field condition, which will be disturbed when we rouse ourselves and bring our faculties under the work-a-day yoke again.

It is on the strength of these considerations that I hazard the conjecture—which, however, is more than that in my own estimation—that the habitual occupation of the mind is not thinking but dreaming. The chief of its employments, its normal and

only spontaneous employment, strictly speaking, is dreaming: 'that is to say, a dreaming which is no different by night and day except in limitation and restraint.'

To come to that conclusion, if it can be done, is to make some advance on solid ground. To be sure, there is nothing in it that will satisfy those who look in dreams for the supernatural and are content with nothing less; but it brings dreaming into the domain of serious speculation. What it is in sleep, when it is under the least degree of constraint (exactly as our muscles are) may be compared without fear of ridicule with what it is in our waking state; and the comparison will probably yield a few results for Reason to go upon. For example. One question is, whether certain of our mental faculties are in abeyance when we dream. At present this question stands as purely hypothetical; the answer being supposed to lie where there is extreme difficulty in getting at it—namely, the mind in sleep. But supposing the dream-state to be the same whether we sleep or wake, evidence on this point may be looked for

in day-dreaming, when the working of our mental faculties do come under trustworthy observation. And what we look for may be found. In day-dreaming we are conscious of a sensation which tells that certain of our faculties have fallen into rest—Will, for instance; while at the same time others are advanced into far greater freedom and activity. But perhaps the word should be not 'others' but 'one other'—Imagination: Imagination with its tributaries, such as hope, fear, memory, retrospection, and that which is the contrary of retrospection and is rather difficult to name: let us say forecast. And since this is our experience in day-dreaming (whether it be specially provoked, or whether it be the idle desultory mind-rambling in which so much of our time is passed), it may fairly be inferred that it is also our experience in sleep-dreaming. That certain of our faculties are in abeyance at such times becomes much less hypothetical at any rate; though it would be rash to infer that they are *always* in abeyance, and not unreasonable to ask whether Imagination itself is not some-

times a substitute for them or for some of them.

Comparison of the two dream-states will bring forward another point, briefly touched upon in the preceding essay. The confusion, the sudden transitions, the merging of one scene into another, the change of one person into another after the fashion of magic-lantern transformations—absurdities, as we agree to call them, which go so far to disqualify sleep-dreams for serious consideration—are not peculiar to them. Not that the absurdities always appear. Many dreams are as reasonable and consecutive in their whole development as the story of a shipwreck or a day's hunting as told by the newspapers. But though these transitions and transfigurations are strongly characteristic of sleep-dreams, they are no peculiarity. In a minor degree they are equally characteristic of day-dreaming, as we see in a moment when we reflect upon what it is. Even when the main course of the dreaming runs on one theme, and that an importunate and deeply interesting one, it commonly takes all manner of eccentric turns, suffers all sorts of inter-

ruptions and intrusions. It often happens in our day-dreaming that we have to call back a vision that delights us, discovering that it has been broken up and dispersed unawares by some ridiculous inconsistent triviality. The transition, sudden or otherwise, was unobserved; the supersession of one set of pictures in the mind by another of quite incongruous character passed undetected.

It has been said that these changings and mergings are characteristic of day-dreaming in 'a minor degree'; but the words need correction, and when corrected they bring us nearer to one safe conclusion from the study of dreams. If the vagaries above described compare in a minor degree with those for which sleep-dreams are so remarkable, it is only because *everything* in the one dream-state is paler and more feeble than in the other. The correspondences between the two are complete throughout, and (an important point) show them to be the same though with an all-pervading difference. No day-dream compares for intensity, vividness, force, wildness, with dreams of the night,

and this difference seems to arise entirely from the fact that in one case imagination possesses the mind much more exclusively than in the other. It is seen at work in a condition of freedom and domination unknown to us in any other mood when awake, and in that condition it transcends all it is capable of when working in harness with the other faculties.

III.—This is something to arrive at; for what if the performances of Imagination when it is most untrammelled are merely extravagant? It is extravagance of power —evidence of potentiality rather, which is more to the purpose for the student of dreams; and this it is even when the extravagance is altogether unmeaning. Power is power in or out of harness, disciplined or undisciplined; and whatever testifies to great latent capability in any quality of the human mind cannot be ridiculous.

But the extravagance of imagination in dreams, is it always unmeaning?

Day-dreaming, with its near resemblances to dreams in sleep, is certainly not an unfruitful state of mind, even when judged by

a high standard of intellectual result. That close thinking is the only means of intellectual achievement is an error, though it is commonly assumed to be a mere natural fact. The truth is that only in a very few employments of the mind does close thinking suffice for great results; if indeed there be any for which it suffices. Even the exact sciences need the aid of imagination, and plenty of it. In other employments, including the greatest, thought is rather the critic, drill-master, filter, shaper of the thing produced than the producer of it; while of what we call 'inspirations' in art, poesy, and the like, the best have no discernible relation with processes of thought. They are present, no doubt; but not, to the mind's own perception and belief, as contributors to the idea that flashes in and over it. The finest outcome of the waking mind, everything that is treated as a pure inspiration of genius, appears accidental to the poet or the philosopher who delivers it. No doubt it often happens that his mind is in high excitement at the time; often, but not always. His experience is, he will tell you, that his mind

is quite as often in a state of listening rest and stillness ; such as the earth seems to fall into, sometimes, on the eve of a summer night. But in either case (which is our point) its condition resembles the dream-state in the grand particular that the more sober faculties which do seem to control imagination are in abeyance. And then comes the inspiration, like the flashing of a word from without, and not at all like thought-product within. And this is not an experience known to poets and philosophers alone. Great engineers and the like can tell that they have had the same happy moments. Their minds released from study, their mental faculties discharged and sent rambling out of school, *then* has come the flash of an idea that weeks of earnest, organised thinking failed to bring in.

Now of course one must be a poet or a philosopher, or, if an engineer, a born genius in that line, to have great ideas in any state of mind. It will not do for every reader of this page to say, 'Well, I know that *my* day-dreaming yields none of these happy

moments; all it is to me is a lounging restful sort of musing, productive of nothing.' Perhaps he is deficient in the qualities that lend themselves to the production of occasional flashes of insight or invention. Possibly the utmost application of his thought when he is most awake yields nothing, or nothing of importance. But supposing him partly gifted, he will acknowledge that when his mind is at lullaby, his faculties all a-wash, so to speak, between sleeping and waking, he often does find matter of considerable value to him in a day-dream. He is struck (the word exactly describes the sensation) by suddenly incursive and unexpected ideas which he feels to be quite beyond the range of his thinking. Hints, perceptions, suggestions start up, which are for him what their happiest inspirations are for the poet and the engineer.

Of course, it does not necessarily follow that our dreams of the night have or can have a similar value. Between the two there may be a fatal difference of excess. A little madness is believed to be an indispensable constituent of genius; and

madness is almost certainly (in the general) a loosening of whatever bond it is which brings the different mental faculties into co-operation with each other in the working hours. Some relaxation of this bond of constraint is necessary for mental rest when we are awake. On the occasions when we pass into the condition called day-dreaming it is still more relaxed; thereupon imagination asserts itself in greater freedom, and then a state of things is set up which very conceivably corresponds to the infusion of 'madness' that seems necessary for genius. And thus the inspirations of day-dreaming are accounted for. But it is equally conceivable that in sleep the loosening of the bond is nearly complete; that therefore our mental faculties become, in the grammatical sense of the word, distraught; that then imagination goes beyond liberty into licence; with the result that, for the time, the mind is quite mad as madness is known to the physicians, and the dreams which are its products in that condition take the same character.

This is what is meant by 'a fatal difference of excess'; a difference like that between

the exhilaration of drinking a small flask of good wine and the consequence of drinking two bottles thereof. Although the comparative freedom of imagination in day-dreaming may liberate ideas and perceptions which study has no power to evoke, that strange electric quality may go wild altogether in a more complete emancipation from the yoke-fellow restraint of the other faculties. It is a very reasonable inference. The fact that day-dreaming and sleep-dreaming are essentially the same is no bar to it; it accords with the manifestations of the more common forms of madness; and it entirely squares with the theory (which will stand, I think) that madness is a constant state of dreaming. Moreover, it is a conclusion that will be welcome to the spirit of the age and be 'jumped at' accordingly. Why it should be welcome is another matter. It is not easy to understand why morbidity of animal function should be to any son of Adam the most pleasurable explanation of dreams, or why there should be an uneasy sort of aversion from the likelihood that they offer mysteries for unravelment which, when

rightly evolved, may show us how great are the capabilities, the latent unformed forces of mind. Perhaps the morbidity account of dreams comforts Stupidity in its narrow house; being an explanation that anybody can understand, and one that is quite sufficient for the sort of dreams which alone are natural to dulness. And perhaps it is because it flatters the pride of scepticism, at the same time giving to it larger warrant, that this same theory affords so much satisfaction.

However, we are still at liberty to investigate, and, what is more to the point, we are free to distinguish. That, in fact, is the chief of his business who would make any study of the subject. We agree that dreams are not all alike, and that there are dreamers and dreamers. The one differ in origin and character—(that is to say, they have their varieties in the same mind)—the other in mental equipment. B can no more estimate the quality of C's dreams by his own than he can measure C's thoughts by the same standard. Yet he rarely finds any difficulty in affecting to do the one thing,

well as he knows that the other would be absurd. Where the thinking processes are poor, inefficient, unfruitful, confused, it is not to be supposed that the dreaming processes will be much otherwise. Or, again, a mind may be perfectly serviceable and well-knit, and yet include barely enough of imagination to hold a candle to the other faculties: perhaps no imagination at all, but only an occasional visit from a wisp of unsteady fancies. No order, no significance can be expected from such minds at any time. They have not the wherewithal; and, along with other unproportioned, inharmonious, or poverty-stricken souls that might be specified, they make up an enormous majority. And what as to the rest? The truth seems to be that by far the greater number of dreams in every mind are meaningless. It would be true to say of them in the general that they do present the strongest likeness to the condition of the mind in madness; probably for the reason given above. But there are many and remarkable exceptions; and to these and to whatever they may signify attention should be especially directed.

If there are wildly extragavant dreams, without sense or order, others take a course as natural and consistent as an episode in real life. The theory that dreams are always occasioned by mental disorder—(disarray ; some of our mental faculties at rest and imagination unbalanced and uncontrolled)—seems to require that they should always be disorderly too. But they are not. Many are not. I cannot suppose that my own experience differs from thousands of others ; and not rarely but commonly I have dreams which are throughout as consistent in scene and circumstance as any of Mr. Kipling's stories for example. Sometimes they are romantic and surprising ; but none the less they move from point to point on a perfectly rational course. The little drama proceeds quite naturally, with no incursions of the grotesque, no lapse into extravagance, but often with slight incidental Defoe-touches, such as a novelist thinks himself happy in contriving to heighten the similitude of his story. Bearing every mark by which we say a tale, a play (or for that matter, a shoe or a house) has been 'put

together,' contrivance is the word that would most certainly apply to the whole structure of such dreams were they the written work of the waking day. And yet we are accustomed to think such orderly contrivance impossible unless the composite machine of mind combines its various faculties in due place and harmony to produce it. Possibly, however, that may be a mistake which observation of sleep-phenomena enables us to correct. In any case, it appears from this kind of dreams that if certain of our mental faculties lapse into dissociation from the rest in sleep, they must be qualities which the mind can *do without* in framing, filling in, and adorning with accessory touches the sane and sequent plot of a story.

Another noteworthy characteristic of these dreams is that they seem to take easily from a store of invention distinct from that which we draw upon, with more or less effort, in our waking hours. The feeling that they do so must be a common experience ; and this observation is carried further by the fact that whereas we have an ever-present though

distant sense of instructing others when we depict a scene or illustrate a character in converse with our friends, it seems to be for our own instruction when our minds do the same thing in a dream.

And how far that may go is seen by such dreams as A.'s, which are related in another page. It is possible to call them extravagant, but not to discover in them any disarray of the mental faculties, any lack of meaning or even of design. On the contrary, we see in them all that we know of design, all that we know of mind working harmoniously for a set purpose. The purpose, too, is of the highest moment; and the whole fable is addressed to the comfort and instruction of the dreamer as if from some source of knowledge or conviction deep in his brain and remote from his command. Dreams they were; but so far are they from bearing witness to mind in disorganisation that they offer suggestions of an opposite character. They seem rather to testify to a double organisation of mentality — one within the other and capable of what that other is not. Not that I am unwilling to believe that

reason had little to do with them ; that it was 'all imagination' ; all done by imagination ; but if that must be the verdict, what of a faculty which brings meanings into common minds that only the highest genius can compass, conveying that meaning with a force and impressiveness that genius in its conscious operation rarely equals? We must begin to think more of it and its powers when it can do such things ; and it certainly seems to me that to reject these works of imagination as spurious because of their apparent excess, or in reliance on a theory that the mind is always in disorder when dreaming, is not quite philosophical.

Furthermore, it is necessary to ask whether the infrequency of such dreams as A.'s is interpreted in a reasonable way. Comparatively rare they are, no doubt ; and whenever they are heard of they are commonly explained as fortuitous—an accidental hit in a thousand misses. When all manner of random fancies crowd the brain night after night, no wonder, it is said, if now and then they seem to have some particular and

direct application. The objection is manifestly just, and it covers many instances, no doubt. But two things should be considered on the other hand. In the first place a distinction must be drawn between random fancies and such organic structures as A.'s dreams, or the proleptic dreams of which some illustrative specimens are given in the preceding essay. The construction of a fable in sleep is as good evidence of mind with all its wits at work in regular order as the construction of a fable for the booksellers while we take a walk. The only test of mind in orderly operation is its orderly working to a distinct purpose. Whether we sleep or wake meanwhile is no part of the test, but is merely coincidental. That is one consideration. The other is, that we do not call the rare inspirations of two or three out of a hundred thousand *thinkers* 'accidental.' Yet it would be just as reasonable to do so, perhaps (I don't know why not), as to cry 'an accidental hit' whenever we hear of a strikingly significant dream. Millions of human beings spend millions of hours every day in thinking and fancying, and the

most of it is rambling nonsense or its equivalent; but although this is a sufficiently well-known fact, we do not say of any original idea that comes up from the general welter of thought-rubbish and day-dream waste, 'merely fortuitous, there can be nothing in it.' Besides, we have already seen that the most beautiful and fruitful ideas of which poetry, philosophy, and even mechanical invention can boast, do come into the mind in fortuitous fashion.

Proleptic dreams like that of the scene in the hotel garden (see p. 34), must also be taken as strong evidence that if most dreams of the night witness to a disordered condition of the mental faculties, all do not. Here again the suggestion is that these faculties are dual; that, to use unscientific language, they exist in man's divided brain in a double set; and that in sleep, or rather in the brief interval of dreaming (which is believed to come between sleeping and waking, and when, perhaps, our various faculties are gathering together for the day's work) the two sets may work for a moment independently. If in that condition the

dominant faculty in the one set were imagination, and in the other observation, the dream in the hotel garden would, perhaps, be accounted for. But in no case can the theory of disorder be admitted here, in the sense that Maury and other inquirers use that word. Physiology, I suppose, can have no objection to this duality theory, which the physical constitution of most creatures seems to favour. But however that may be, it is a theory that should engage the attention of students of dream-phenomena. The disorder theory does not suffice. After plentiful discussion it is commonly accepted as the one satisfactory explanation of the whole of these phenomena; but it is certain that some dreams lie quite beyond it, and equally clear that those which do lie beyond it are by far the most interesting and suggestive. Indeed, it might almost be said that they are the only ones that yield anything to serious consideration.

IV.—But all are worth pausing upon for one thing. Every dream testifies to the existence in imagination of extraordinary

powers—powers which do not come under our control as yet, and perhaps may never come. Whether they are likely to do so or not, however, is one of the points for elucidation as we approach the final outcome of a rational study of dreams. The final outcome, because everything in our dream-experience, whether by night or day, brings out imagination as the mightiest and most mysterious of our mental faculties; and one that we may look to for far more instruction —especially of the loftier kind—than some other intellectual qualities, which seem to hold it in suppression, will allow the possibility of.

Under the name of intuition, it has, indeed, found acknowledgment as a revealing faculty, with the grudging assent of Reason itself. And that undoubtedly is what it is. 'Intuition' is an equivoque expressive of some attribute of the human mind which unfolds truths and meanings unattained by thought, experience, or the teaching of other minds; and perhaps unattainable by such means. The word appears to have been chosen under stress of the idea that nothing

can be known that is not somehow *taught*. Therefore 'intuition' seems to signify the inner presence of a teaching which, to some extent and in certain ways, transcends the capabilities of the mind-machine; and if it does so to some extent, it is obvious that the teaching may be able to go very much further for aught that the mind-machine can tell us to the contrary.

Many persons will not agree with me, belike, that intuition and imagination are radically the same thing, if not the same entirely. They will argue for the presence in the one of a divine element which the other does not possess. On that point I could compromise, for my part — affirming that there is something that can be called divine in both. But what immediately concerns us is to take notice that, by common consent, there is a quality in the human mind through which we receive convincing and unquestioned intimations of much that reaches our intelligence by no other means. Further it appears that though according to the general experience of mankind there are limits to the power or the operation of this revealing

faculty, no one can define its bounds or say what measure of revelation it may not be capable of in some minds and on some occasions. If, then, intuition and imagination are the same thing, the quasi-supernatural character which is commonly allowed to it under one name must belong to it under the other. If they are different things, one constituent of the mental organism may still be pointed to which, by general acknowledgment, is a revealing faculty ; and since there is one it cannot be absurd to speculate whether there may not be two ; and if there be two they must be alike in this at least—that our other faculties, which receive the revelation without knowing how to account for it, can in neither case tell how far it might possibly go.

The purpose of the foregoing paragraphs will not be misapprehended. It is not to argue that dreams are, as they have been so often thought, vehicles of communication from other worlds, or even from the Divine Spirit itself. All that is left for whosoever chooses to proceed from the clearer spaces of speculation into the outward darkness

thereof. The purpose is to dissipate the superstitious fear of being drawn into superstition—a dread which has long been the most inveterate stumbling-block in the way of a boldly reasonable study of dreams. When it is remembered (I ask) that intuition, whatever its origin and breeding in the brain, is a revealing power, or at any rate may be held to be so without incurring the danger of running into superstition, who should fear to believe imagination a faculty of the same kind? Who should fear to allow it the same function, or to admit that, like intuition, its potentialities are immeasurable by ourselves?

In point of fact, we know as well as we know anything of such matters that it is a faculty of the same kind, if it be not the self-same thing. What has been said in a previous page of the 'inspirations' of poets and philosophers is full evidence of likeness, perhaps of identity. When we speak of Shakespeare's miraculous genius, miraculous is the word we mean. It is an expression of unbelief that his own experience, observation of things visible within range of his eyes, in-

ference by process of reflection upon what he saw, or felt, or heard, or read of, can account for all that is found in his pages. Something unacquirable by any of these means, something that carried their work far beyond their own usefulness in it, must be called in to explain those flashes of enlightenment by which he drew out of darkness a thousand things till then half seen and half known. Whether to call this inexplicable something intuition or imagination we are never quite certain. Now we give it the one name, now the other; thinking of intuition when we say imagination (though not when the poet is at his highest) and of imagination when the word is used which we understand least of the two. But whether the one word or the other be chosen, it is intended to signify a mysterious quality which, judged by its operations as we are conscious of them, and the outcome when critically viewed and compared, hardly seems to be a constituent part of the mind-machine at all. It may rather be fancied an informing spirit attendant on the composite mind-organism of which Will is the directing member, or as bearing to the

whole machine a relationship not unlike that of the mind to the body. Just as the mind-machine is a mystery in the body for the wonders it performs there, so is imagination in and to the mind. As the body can never know what powers the mind may be able to exert, neither will any thinker affect to map out the limits of intuition, which is acknowledged to be beyond the ken of thought. And since what is called intuition and what is called imagination have the strange gift of unveiling and revealing, the question is why any one should start from the appearance of this same revealing power when imagination is followed into sleep. What hesitation should there be in acknowledging the possibility that it can be as sane a quality in sleep-dreams as in day-dreams, and as truly unveiling?

These questions seem no less reasonable when we remember the scope which at one time and another is allowed on all hands to the faculty of imagination. Sometimes the name of it is used with large yet restricted meanings, as if it resembled the play of some internal light in the workshop of the brain.

Sometimes it is a synonym for mere nonsense; or it is employed to suggest a will-o-the-wisp emanation from unreclaimed marshes in the psychologic interior. But at other times it designedly stands for a gift which the most scientific intellects, and such as are jealous of superstition in every shape, are content to call *divination*. The truth is, no doubt, that imagination can be all these things; the same, but of different growths and stages of growth; of various qualities and degrees; differing, too, not only in accordance with the mind it dwells in, but also according to mood in the same mind. And that being so, to those who think his cogitations idle the student of dreams may of course concede that an enormous proportion of them are confused extravagant nonsense. Of course they are; like about the same proportion of day-dreams. But though it is admitted that the most disorderly workings of imagination do account for the phenomena of sleep, we are not precluded by that necessary admission from explaining them also by the higher manifestations of the same quality; no, nor by the highest, as

when it passes into what the soberest call 'divination.' Nothing in nature compels us to distinguish between the inspiration that beams through a mooning day-dream, and one that, being equally fresh and suggestive, unfolds in some dramatic dream in sleep.

To be sure, if the mind is invariably disordered when we dream—disordered as such investigators as M. Maury, following the physiologists, insists that it is—the most sane and significant dream must be looked at twice. But is it invariably disordered in any sense of the word? The oft-quoted dream of Condorcet opposes a negative answer, and not that alone: there have been many such. Condorcet solved in a dream a mathematical problem which had altogether baffled his powers when awake. How are such experiences to be accounted for? In its mildest form the disorder theory is that the mind is incapable of harmonious and therefore effective action when we sleep; its faculties disbanding and going apart, some to slumber, some falling into a doze, and only one or two perhaps ever quite awake. So we may figure a company of soldiers

round a camp-fire at night after a weary march. But it is a common experience that —as the theory implies—the faculties which are the most necessary for the work of solving difficult problems are precisely those that are least active in sleep. There is strong reason to believe, indeed, that they are dormant altogether. Will certainly; and Will seems indispensable in study and school for bending the other faculties to mathematical work, and for keeping them sufficiently disciplined while so engaged. And yet Condorcet's problem was duly solved? If so, we must come to one of two conclusions, apparently. The first, that there *are* dreams in which the mental faculties are employed without disorder; dreams in which they work together in harmonious combination exactly as they do in a well-balanced mind under the direction of the waking will. It follows, then, that their working in sleep may be as well worthy of respect as their working at other times; moreover, that strange as the product may be, it deserves as much attention—dream though it be called—as a great deal else of admitted and acknowledged

wonder proceeding from our own cerebro-spinal centres. The other conclusion is more surprising still. It is that Condorcet's free imagination solved in a flash the problem that was too much for the whole combination of faculties best fitted (as we opine) for the task. We are to infer from his case and the like of it that imagination can assume in dreams the function of other and very different qualities, and do in a moment what they whose proper business it was failed to achieve by hours of laborious effort.

Whether such powers are possible or not I do not affect to decide. All that I presume to do is to raise suggestions and fling out hints for cogitation. But judging from what is known of imagination (insight, intuition, or what not) I should readily accept any good evidence that it could go to that length: to that length for example, and amongst other feats. Indeed, the whole intent and purpose of these pages is to enforce the suggestion which runs through them all; to wit, that no conception of the sweep and force of imagination is too wide to be brought to the study of dreaming, and that its possi-

bilities include what is now called miraculous power. The general conception of imagination is confused in detail and erroneously weak in the bulk; though why it is so may be easily understood. The imposing and irreproachable associations that gather round the word 'reasoning'; the phantasies, the dubieties, the grotesquerie, the flightiness, the illusion and delusion that mingle with the loftier associations of the word 'imagination,' conspire to give that quality the lower place which should have the higher in all men's esteem. Yet we are not without knowledge of it as an occasional worker of miracles; and what we know it to be at its utmost or thereabout should never be lost sight of in an inquiry like this, from which intimations beyond the power of reason to afford or the waking fancy to supply cannot be excluded.

Especially it should be remembered that of all the attributes of the human mind, imagination has done the most for mind itself. A little thought, and it becomes clear that had mind been destitute of imagination, the several thing called Reason would have crawled like a snail from its beginnings to

this hour—at a snail's rate of progress and with a snail-range of circumspection and discovery. Judgment, upon which we depend so much, would have been a starved growth and universally incompetent. But that is not saying enough. It is difficult to conceive of judgment in any stage of existence without imagination to inform it; nor does it exist, indeed—except in a weak, erring, elementary, and therefore useless state—amongst men the most high reasoning who are sparingly endowed with the gift divine.

Had it been quite withheld, the eyes of the mind would have been nearly sightless and its ears all but deaf. The world without would have been little more to it than so much substantiality, touching no sense of beauty and leaving the brain unpopulated by the throng of sensations which puts life at its highest for all mankind and inspires its noblest achievements. With all the rest of our mental faculties, but without imagination, the philosophic and the scientific mind could not have been. The poet's divinations—which are not merely pleasur-

able to responsive imagination in folk less endowed, but stepping-stones to the comprehension of the loftiest things—are bestowed by this faculty. And when a man like Newton himself has brought together his calculations, observations, comparisons and the like, they often lie like the fruits on Abel's altar till a flash of inspiration (imagination) fires them up into a blaze of discovered truth.

All this should the student of dreams bear in mind; with the reflection that when we have ascended to the topmost height of what we know imagination can do we become aware that its potentialities may rise infinitely higher: far and far beyond sight. Obviously, it is a reasonable if not an indispensable thing for the student to do; and if he does it the purpose of these remarks will be achieved. He will not be unduly fearful of admitting the possibility that the hints and impartations of imagination in sleep may transcend its powers when yoked with other faculties awake.

And if they can take this wider range—and the supposition is upheld by a vast deal

of direct and indirect evidence—what then? Why then on this long-standing ground of antipathy superstition and reason will be reconciled; and that in a manner honourable to both parties. The ancient ineradicable belief in dreams as conveyancers of supernatural intimations will be justified, not, however, by the discovery of mystic influences from without, but by a fuller understanding of that mysterious agency within ourselves which in one shape is already known as 'intuition,' while in others it is called by the name of 'divination.' Ask the materialist philosopher to inquire into the phenomena of dreams, and he takes it for an invitation to run after ghosts,—to accompany a grovelling return to the superstitions of the Dark Ages. It is not that, but simply an invitation to look into the operation of our mental gifts under different conditions of collocation and activity. The inquiry is whether, when we dream, our intellectual faculties still work in co-operation, or only sometimes, or never at all; whether, if some remain dormant while others are alert and observant, which of them do slumber;

whether the dormancy of some affects the activity of others, in what way, and to what extent; whether, if the capability of those that are most active is enhanced by liberation from the rest, they are always disordered as well as strengthened in that condition; whether, since there are undoubtedly dreams wherein all the known faculties of mind take part, while yet these dreams are as first-night plays or first-read tales to him whose sleep they enliven—whether, I say, such phenomena point to a doubling of the mind machinery, the dual character of the various functions of mind. These and their like are the questions which the student of dreams should consider—getting clear of the pride of scepticism, the dread of being thought superstitious, the morbidity fallacy, and also of a sufficient amount of the common indisposition to accept as trustworthy any man's account of his dreamings, no matter how unimpeachable his word may be in other matters where proof is unattainable, or however strange and impressive we know our own experience to be. There is a weakness of scepticism as

well as a weakness of belief, and there is an hypocrisy of both. A careful man is as studious to avoid the one weakness as the other, and a high-minded man to make no choice between the two hypocrisies.

NOTES

PORTENT-DREAMS OF PHYSICAL DISORDER

It is not pretended that dreams of obscure physical disorder are as well-established articles of knowledge as Jupiter's moons. But they are believed in, and belief is likely to extend with investigation.

Of course the difficulty of arriving at any positive conclusion in such matters is very great, and must so remain. Not uncommonly, indeed, dreams do suggest apprehensions of approaching illness. That we often hear of; but not, perhaps, till the dreamer has already felt himself 'out of sorts,' and very rarely with an association of the incidents of the dream with the symptoms of a particular malady — as of a growing tumour, for example. Dreams are not studied with that view.

Unless brain disturbance is suspected, no one thinks of interrogating them with intent to report the result to a doctor should they seem to yield indications of unrevealed disease. Nor are many of us capable of interpreting such indications when they do occur; for the reason that we have not enough of physiological knowledge to work upon. Therefore no story that could be formed in our own minds would be thought worth repeating to a doctor; and even if the dream did embody certain hints and revelations, it remains questionable whether the doctor, being informed of them, would have perception enough to understand and turn them to account.

But it is abundantly evident that dreams of a certain order do arise from physical distress. Of such are the dyspepsia dreams, so commonly known; while others of a more marked and particular kind generally ensue on taking this drug or that. The last-named fact is usually brought to notice after this fashion: 'That there is nothing mysterious about dreams is further shown by the circumstance that we can produce at will any one of half a dozen different kinds of dreams by simply choosing out and administering one of as many chemical agents.' No doubt this is true; but a more significant and therefore a more profitable way of putting the matter would be to say that the body being thrown into a certain condition by the action of a certain drug, the mind is filled with emotions and fantasies aroused by that condition,

appropriate to it, and testifying at once to its existence and its character. The dream tells of the drug—names it, so to speak ; and answers to its peculiar action in the body. Now there is no more truth in the first of these two ways of stating the facts than there is in the second. Yet there is a difference between them which amounts to this: in the one the dream figures as the physiologist's toy, in the other as his instructor.

It appears to be all in the course of nature, then, that dreams of even the lowest order, morbidity dreams themselves, should be capable of aiding the physician and enlightening his studies. Here also it seems possible to collect evidence, classify, and deduce; and it is an operation quite without danger, since the advantage to be drawn from it (if any) is only that of being put on the track of latent disease. It is not a study which imports the risk of blundering experimental treatment.

What danger there is takes another shape. It would be conceivably mischievous to encourage a habit of brooding upon dreams as probable indications of undeveloped physical disorder. Yet, from the nature of the case, this danger is inconsiderable. For a single unrepeated dream could not be taken to signify anything; it would pass as does some temporary unrepeated feeling of uneasiness in the muscles of a limb. It is only when the dream recurs again and again, in substantially the same character, that it can be

suspected of being symptomatic of some physical distress of a kind that is worth attention. But recurrent dreams are not a very common experience, and wherever they appear they probably do indicate the intrusion of frequent or continuous disorder of the physical system.

By way of illustration, I may add that for many years I have had two recurrent dreams, always the same except in the most trifling details, both ugly and bizarre, and both, I have no doubt, expressive and warning, though of nothing serious. One of the two will not bear relation on account of its repulsiveness; and in that dream I do now find a direct significance, after wondering at various times over a stretch of twenty years what meaning its recurrence in precisely the same form and circumstance could possibly have. The other dream I see no meaning in yet, though meaning of some kind it must have, however small; for no such dream is likely to be repeated a dozen times at year-long intervals or more, except as the expression of distinct and precisely recurrent physical conditions. In this case I dream that I am walking in the fields. I saunter along idly, pleasantly, through level meadows, and by and by come to a narrow stream; the whole scene being just such an one as the angler resorts to in Hampshire. But I am no fisherman, and never think of rod-fishing except as a dull delight about which a vast deal of lyrical nonsense is sung to one old tune. Yet, when I look into the stream,

and see there many good fish gliding, I wish for a rod and a creel. The wish is no sooner formed than it rises to eagerness, for at every moment the fish become larger and larger and still more plentiful. Before long they might be baled out with a bucket; yet a little while and they might be cast to the bank in heaps with a malt-shovel. Rapidly changing in shape and size from pretty one-pound trout to great-eyed, loose-mouthed cod-like monsters, they presently fill the whole bed of the stream—fill it pile-high in a horrible sweltering heap; which becomes more horrible still in another moment, when the ghastly creatures die and fall to pieces. An unendurable sight, instantly followed by the relief of waking, but not to shake off the squalid terror of the scene for hours after. At intervals of months, or more frequently of years, this dream has been repeated many times, with no difference of detail whatever; except, perhaps, the direction of the stream or the time of day. And it is to the purpose (as my being no angler is) that though I often dream, my dreams are very rarely 'bad.' They are almost invariably as pleasant as reading in a good book of romance or listening to strange, significant stories of real life.

DREAMS OF ANTICIPATION

Another example of this order of dreams may be given; one which, like most of its kind, had no

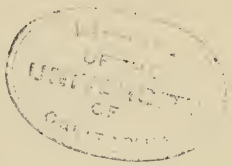
discoverable significance, and yet was very curious in itself.

One night I dreamt that, making a call on some matter of business I was shown into a fine great drawing-room and asked to wait. Accordingly, I went over to the fire-place in the usual English way, proposing to wait there. And there, after the same fashion, I lounged with my arm upon the mantel-piece; but only for a few moments. For feeling that my fingers had rested on something strangely cold, I looked, and saw that they lay on a dead hand: a woman's hand newly cut from the wrist.

Though I woke in horror on the instant, this dream was quite forgotten—at any rate for the time—when I did next day make a call on some unimportant matter of business, was shown into a pretty little room adorned with various knick-knacks, and then was asked to wait. Glancing by chance toward the mantel-piece (the dream of the previous night still forgotten), what should I see upon it but the hand of a mummy, broken from the wrist. It was a very little hand, and on it was a ring that would have been a 'gem ring' if the dull red stone in it had been genuinely precious. Wherefore I concluded that it was a woman's hand.

Coincidence. The dream certainly taught nothing, and had no discernible purpose. Yet visions of severed hands on mantel-pieces are not common, and, with or without previous dreaming

of it, few men have actually seen one, even when taken from a mummy case, in that precise situation. Now had I myself rifled the tomb where she reposed from whom the relic was torn, or had I by any means acquired that poor little brown hand to make bric-a-brac of it, my dream would have been pertinent enough. Then it would have made a pretty tale, with a moral that is not unneeded, perhaps. But, as it is, we can make nothing better of it than a dream gone astray.



THE END.

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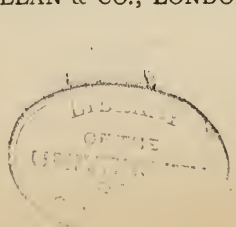

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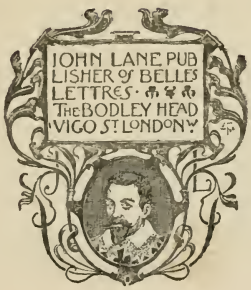

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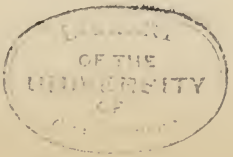

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